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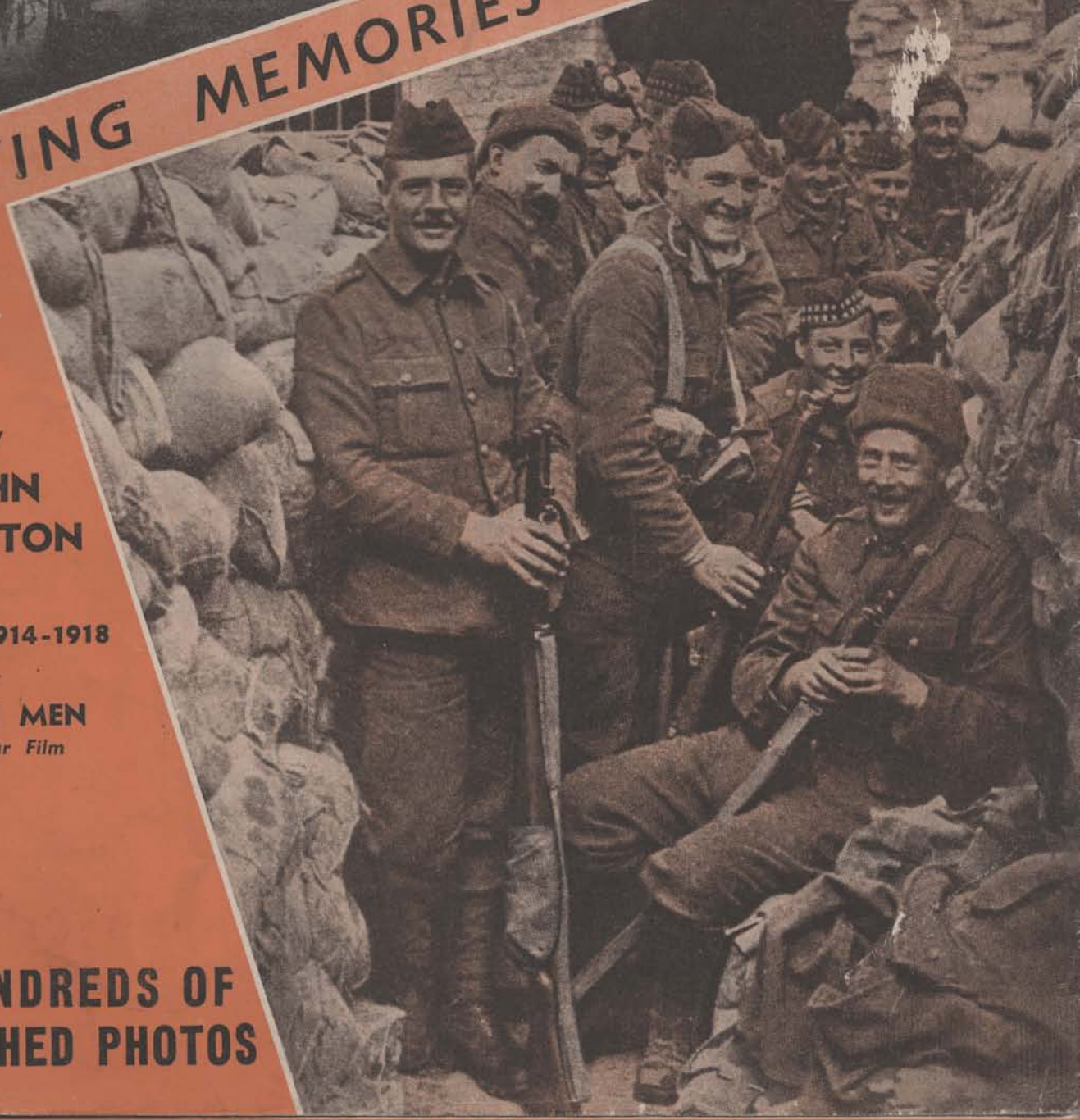
UNDYING MEMORIES OF 1914-1918

Edited by
**SIR JOHN
HAMMERTON**

Editor of
WORLD WAR 1914-1918

Writer of
FORGOTTEN MEN
The Famous War Film

**MANY HUNDREDS OF
UNPUBLISHED PHOTOS**



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With Acknowledgements to Authors and Publishers

WEEK by week we acknowledge here our indebtedness to the many authors and publishers without whose courteous permission to reprint selected pages from the books written and published by them the compilation of the present work could not have been achieved. In our volumes as finally bound these acknowledgements will be repeated in the preliminary pages

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Leaves from the Editor's Note-Book

John Carpenter House, London, E.C.4

ON more than one occasion in these Notes I have taken the opportunity to point out in reply to correspondents that a large part of the matter printed in our chapters is in the nature of an anthology, and that, therefore, the writers of these chapters are solely responsible for the statements they make, statements which, in a few instances, may not coincide in every degree with those made in the Official History of the War, since our writers are the men "who were there," writing in some cases on the actual scene of their sometimes terrible experiences. However, I think it is perhaps desirable to make it clear that the sole responsibility for the headings of all these chapters is editorial.

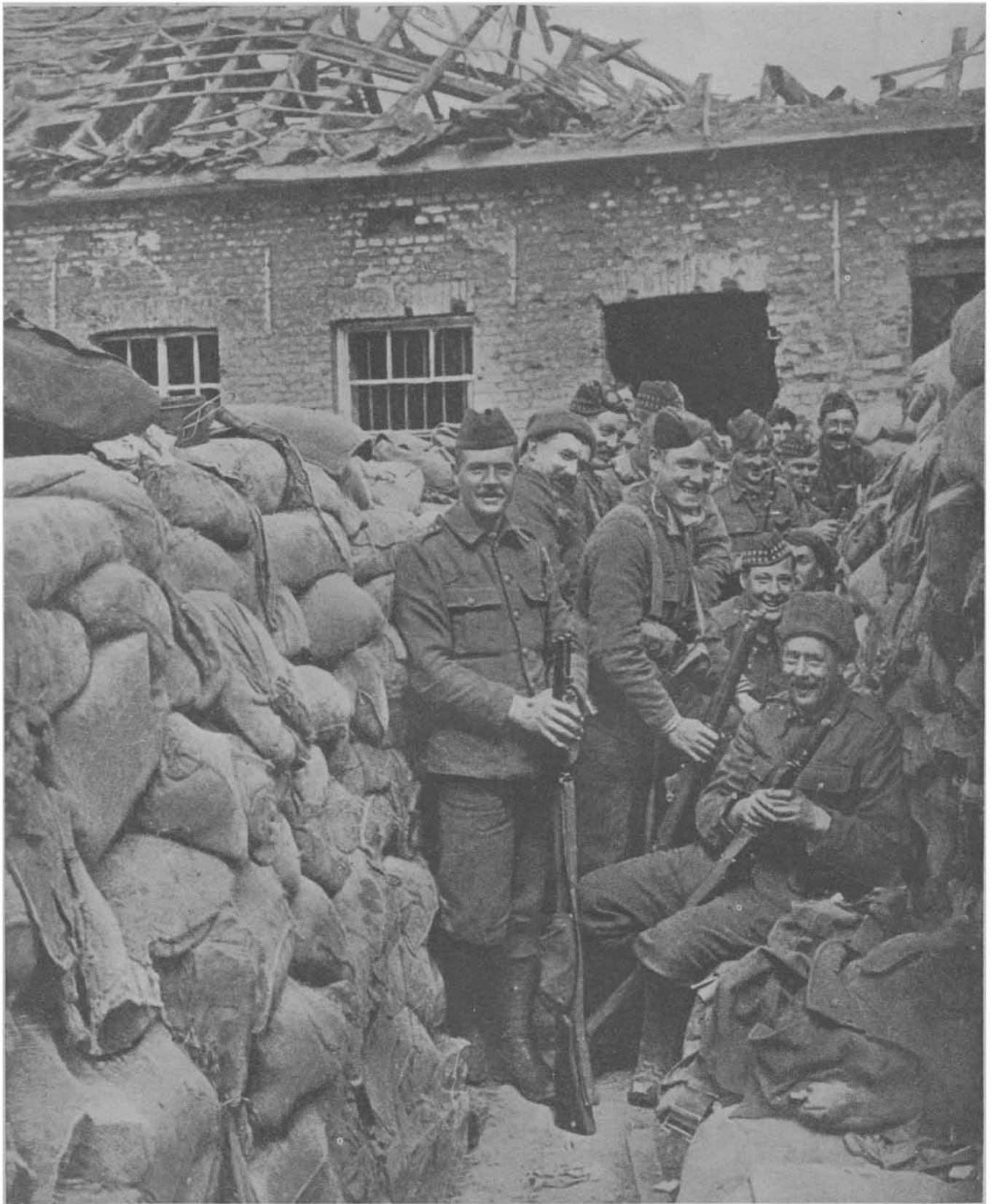
THE actual titles of the books from which the anthology chapters are taken are given on the second page of this wrapper in every Part. The authors, therefore, must not be held responsible for any appearance of egotism in the headings, since these are in most cases my own inventions, written with a view to suggesting something of the vividness with which the chapters are presented. Often that can only be suggested by the use of the personal pronoun. Every man who served knows that egotism is very rarely the fault of a soldier.

AT the end of my notes in this page in the last Part, I printed an extremely interesting letter from Mr. Goodman, an ex-sergeant of the 37th Howitzer Battery, R.F.A., describing the achievements of his battery at Le Cateau on August 26, 1914, when no fewer than four V.C.'s were gained by it in one day.

LIKE some other correspondents, Mr. Goodman looks rather eagerly for the mention in our pages of the particular Battery or Unit in which he served: but neither he nor the other correspondents with a similar very natural interest must be disappointed if a particular unit does not get an actual mention. As I have remarked before, we are to some extent dependent upon the particular authors whom we are able to select, for if they do not happen to mention a unit, I clearly cannot force it in. Under the laws of copyright governing extracts such as those to which I refer they must be reproduced exactly as they were originally written. There were a very large number of batteries on the Western front and although some, such as the 37th Howitzer Battery, R.F.A., performed heroic actions, it is by no means certain that a reference to them can be included, particularly when it is remembered that the Official History of the War on the Western Front alone, occupies up to date some seven volumes totalling about 5,000 pages, and even so necessarily omits many units. To include them all would make a book far larger than my readers could possibly afford and, incidentally, far less interesting than the carefully planned and selected scheme of chapters that comprises I WAS THERE.

I AM receiving a number of photographs from readers in response to my suggestion in an early Part that they might send me photographs if there were any in their possession of outstanding interest. I am sure that I shall not hurt their feelings if I say that straightforward photographs of groups are of interest mainly to the persons shown in them, and would not, and could not be of sufficient interest to the bulk of my readers to publish in our pages. I would ask them, therefore, to study the kind of photographs that are published in our pages and send me only those which they feel certain have a similar general appeal.

[Continued in page iii of this wrapper.]



BEFORE THE DAYS OF DEEP DUG-OUTS

In the earlier days of the Great War some forward positions included the wreckage of houses, as shown here, which, with sandbags stacked high, gave reasonable cover and concealment for observers and the men moving into and out of the line. But, as the conflict grew, the hideous might of the guns razed and obliterated such vantage points, driving the combatants on both sides below the surface of the earth into trenches and deep dug-outs.



Daily Mirror

ALL LONDON MEN KNEW THE 'TOWER BRIDGE' AT LOOS

In the midst of Loos there stood this giant steel structure, which carried the winding gear of a mine. For miles around the towers and gantries, nicknamed by the men of London "The Tower Bridge" and "The Crystal Palace," were visible, and when the great battle of Loos opened on September 25, 1915, they served as a guiding point for the British infantrymen as they thrust forward in the cold light of dawn. They are seen again as they appeared during various periods of the offensive in the photographs in page 464.

Loos: Ill-starred Offensive

Sept. 25 — Oct. 19, 1915

ON September 25, 1915, there was launched one of the bloodiest and most costly battles of the war against the German positions at Loos. Full of high hopes and supported by a strong preliminary bombardment, the British troops advanced to the assault, but in the end achieved little in return for a casualty list of approximately 2,000 officers and 50,000 men. ¶ This sad episode is described by the famous war correspondent, Sir Philip Gibbs, who saw the massing of the troops in the back areas, and by those who followed and shared their fortunes in the field: Mr. John Easton and three eminent writers known to a great post-War public, Mr. Patrick Macgill, Mr. Robert Graves, and "F.O.O." (Mr. John Rhode). ¶ Before the embers of this battle had died down the civilized world was shocked by the news of the shooting of Nurse Cavell. His vain pleas for mercy are here recounted by the American Minister in Brussels, Mr. Brand Whitlock. ¶ The section ends on a more peaceful note with the story of a very temporary armistice at Christmas 1915, by Mr. Wilfred Ewart.

* 86 September 1915

PRELUDE to LOOS TRAGEDY

From Café to Ditch of Death

by Sir Philip Gibbs, K.B.E.

THE movements of troops and the preparations for big events revealed to every British soldier in France the "secret" of the coming battle. Casualty clearing-stations were ordered to make ready for big numbers of wounded. That was always one of the first signs of approaching massacre.

Vast quantities of shells were being brought up to the railheads and stacked in the "dumps." They were the first fruit of the speeding-up of munition factories at home after the public outcry against shell-shortage and the lack of high-explosives. Well, at last the guns would not be starved. There was enough high-explosive force available to blast the German trenches off the map. So it seemed to our innocence—though years afterwards we knew that no bombardment would destroy all earthworks, such as Germans made, and that always machine-guns would slash our infantry advancing over the chaos of mangled ground.

BEHIND our lines in France, in scores of villages where our men were quartered, there was a sense of impending fate. Soldiers of the New Army knew that in a little while the lessons they had learnt in the school of courage would be put to a more frightful test than that of holding trenches in stationary warfare. Their boredom, the intolerable monotony of that routine life, would be broken by more sensational drama; and some of them were glad of that and said: "Let's get on with it. Anything rather than that deadly stagnation." And others, who guessed they were chosen for the coming battle, and had a clear vision of

what kind of things would happen (they knew something about the losses at Neuve Chapelle and Festubert), became more thoughtful than usual, deeply introspective, wondering how many days of life they had left to them.

Life was good out of the line in that September of 1915. The land of France was full of beauty, with bronzed corn-stocks in the fields, and scarlet poppies in the grass; and a golden sunlight on old barns, and on little white churches, and in orchards heavy with fruit. It was good to go into the garden of a French château and pluck a rose and smell its sweetness, and think back to England, where other roses were blooming. England! . . . And in a few days—who could say?—perhaps eternal sleep somewhere near Lens.

GRIM HUMOUR OF WAR

SOME officers of the Guards came into the garden of the little house where I lived at that time with other onlookers. It was an untidy garden, with a stretch of grass-plot too rough to be called a lawn, but with pleasant shade under the trees, and a "potager" with raspberries and currants on the bushes, and flower-beds where red and white roses dropped their petals.

Two officers of the Scots Guards, inseparable friends, came to gossip with us, and read the papers, and drink a little whisky in the evenings, and pick the raspberries. They were not professional soldiers. One of them had been a stockbroker, the other "something in the City." They disliked the Army system with an undisguised hatred and contempt. They hated war with a ferocity which was only a little

"camouflaged" by the irony and the brutality of their anecdotes of war's little comedies. They took a grim delight in the humour of corpses, lice, bayonet-work, and the sniping of fair-haired German boys. They laughed, almost excessively, at these attributes of warfare, and one of them used to remark, after some such anecdote: "And once I was a little gentleman!" He was a gentleman still with a love of Nature in his heart—I saw him touch the petals of living roses with a caress in his finger-tips.

OTHER officers of the Guards came into the garden—Grenadiers. There were two young brothers of an old family who had always sent their sons to war. They looked absurdly young when they took off their tunics and played a game of cricket, with a club for a bat, and a tennis-ball. They were just schoolboys, but with the gravity of men who knew that life is short. I watched their young athletic figures so clean-limbed, so full of grace, as they threw the ball; and had a vision of them lying mangled.

An Indian prince came into the garden. It was Ranjitsinhji, who had carried his bat to many a pavilion where English men and women had clapped their hands to him, on glorious days when there was sunlight on English lawns. He took the club and stood at the wicket and was bowled third ball by a man who had only played cricket after ye manner of Stratford-atte-Bow. But then he found himself, handled the club like a sword, watched the ball with a falcon's eye, played with it. He was on the Staff of the Indian Cavalry Corps.

They went out into the darkness of the village lane. Battalions were already on the move, in the night. Their steady tramp of feet beat on the hard road. Their dark figures looked like an army of ghosts. Sparks were spluttering out of the funnels of Army cookers. A British soldier in full field-kit was kissing a woman in the shadow-world



TOWN OF MANY HAPPY MEMORIES

Béthune was one of the towns close behind the Allied line that remained habitable through most of the war years, and, as described in this chapter, many a British soldier found in its cafés a few hours of happy relief from the horrors of the trenches. In the German advance of March 1918 Béthune was heavily shelled and much of it destroyed, but it was never taken. This photograph shows Béthune as it is today, with the belfry, remembered by thousands of men, restored and no longer obscured by surrounding houses.

Photo. A. J. Insall, copyright A.P. Ltd.

of an estaminet. I passed close to them, almost touching them, before I was aware of their presence.

"Bonne chance!" said the woman. "Quand tu reviens—"

"One more kiss, lassie," said the man.

"Mais comme tu es gourmand, toi!"

He kissed her savagely, hungrily. Then he lurched off the side-walk and formed up with other men in the darkness.

THE Scots Guards moved next morning. I stood by the side of the colonel, who was in a gruff mood.

"It looks like rain," he said, sniffing the air. "It will probably rain like hell when the battle begins."

I think he was killed somewhere by Fosse 8. The two comrades in the Scots Guards were badly wounded. One of the young brothers was killed and the other maimed. I found their names in the casualty lists which filled columns of "The Times" for a long time after Loos.

The town of Béthune was the capital of our Army in the Black Country of the French coalfields. It was not much shelled in those days, though afterwards—years afterwards—it was badly damaged by long-range guns, so that its people fled, at last, after living so long on the edge of war.

Its people were friendly to our men, and did not raise their prices exorbitantly. There were good shops in the town—"as good as Paris," said soldiers who had never been to Paris but found these plate-glass windows dazzling after trench life and loved to see the "mamzelles" behind the counters and walking out, smartly, with little high-heeled shoes. There were tea-shops, crowded always with officers on their way to the line or just out of it, and they liked to speak French with the girls who served them. Those girls saw the hunger in those men's eyes, who watched every movement they made, who tried to touch their hands and their frocks in passing. They knew they were desired, as daughters of

Eve, by boys who were starved of love. They took that as part of their business, distributing cakes and buns without favour, with laughter in their eyes, and a merry word or two.

Now and then, when they had leisure, they retired to inner rooms, divided by curtains from the shop, and sat on the knees of young British officers while others played ragtime or sentimental ballads on untuned pianos.

There was champagne as well as tea to be had in these bun-shops, but the A.P.M. was down on disorder or riotous gaiety, and there were no orgies. "Pas d'orgies," said the young lady severely, when things were getting a little too lively. They had to think of their business.

DOWN side-streets here and there were houses where other women lived not so severe in their point of view. Their business, indeed, did not permit of severity, and they catered for the hunger of men exiled year after year from their own home life and from decent womanhood. They gave the base counterfeit of love in return for a few francs, and there were long lines of men, English, Irish and Scottish soldiers, who waited their turn to get that vile imitation of life's romance from women who were bought and paid for.

The inhabitants of Béthune, the shopkeepers, and brave little families of France, and bright-eyed girls, and frowzy women, and heroines and harlots came out into the streets before the battle of Loos, and watched the British Army pouring through—battalions of Londoners and Scots, in full fighting kit, with hot sweat on their faces, and grim eyes, and endless columns of field-guns and limbers, drawn by hard-mouthed mules cursed and thrashed by their drivers, and ambulances, empty now, and wagons, and motor-lorries; hour after hour and day after day.

“Cré nom de Dieu!” said French peasants . . . in villages like Gouy, Servins, Heuchin, Houdain, Grenay, Bruay, and Pernes. “The cauldron is boiling up . . . There will be a fine pot-au-feu.”

IN those villages—Heuchin, Houdain, Lillers and others—on the edge of the Black Country the Scottish troops of the 15th Division were in training for the arena, practising attacks on trenches and villages, getting a fine edge of efficiency on to bayonet-work and bombing, and having their morale heightened by addresses from Brigadiers and Divisional Commanders on the glorious privilege which was about to be theirs of leading the assault, and on the joys as well as the duty of killing Germans.

It was the first big attack of the 15th Division. They were determined to go fast and go far. Their pride of race was stronger than the strain on their nerves. Many of them, I am certain,

had no sense of fear, no apprehension of death or wounds. Excitement, the comradeship of courage, the rivalry of battalions, lifted them above anxiety before the battle began, though here and there men . . . of more delicate fibre, of imagination as well as courage, must have stared in great moments at the grisly spectre towards whom they would soon be walking.

HONOUR FOR THE NEW ARMY

IN other villages were battalions of the 47th London Division. They, too, were to be in the first line of attack, on the right of the Scots. They, too, had to win honour for the New Army, and old London. They were a different crowd from the Scots, not so hard, not so steel-nerved, with more sensibility to suffering, more imagination, more instinctive revolt against the butchery that was to come. But they, too, had been “doped” for morale, their nervous tension had been tightened up by speeches addressed to their spirit and tradition.

It was to be London’s day out. They were to fight for the glory of the old town . . . the old town where they had lived in little suburban houses with flower gardens, where they had gone up by the early morning trains to City offices and Government offices, and warehouses and shops, in days before

they ever guessed they would go a-soldiering, and crouch in shell-holes under high explosives, and thrust sharp steel into German bowels. But they would do their best. They would go through with it. They would keep their sense of humour and make Cockney jokes at death. They would show the stuff of London pride.

“Domine dirige nos!”

I watched the preliminary bombardment of the Loos battlefields from a black slag-heap beyond Noeux-les-Mines, and afterwards went on to the battle-ground up to the Loos Redoubt, when our guns and the enemy’s were hard at work, and later still, in years that followed, when there was never a silence of the guns in those fields, came to know the ground from many points of view.

IT was a hideous territory, this Black Country between Lens and Hulluch. From the flat country below the distant ridges of Notre Dame de Lorette and Vimy there rose a number of high, black cones made by the refuse of the coal mines, which were called Fosses. Around those black mounds there was great slaughter, as at Fosse 8 and Fosse 10 and Puits 14 bis, and the Double Crassier near Loos, because they gave observation and were important to

TRAINED TO THE LAST MINUTE

In this page Sir Philip Gibbs describes the intensive training which the Scottish troops of the 15th Division underwent before being flung into the battle of Loos. The photograph shows a Scottish regiment marching through a village to concentrate for the battle, headed by a couple of pipers. During the battle of Loos the British losses were over 50,000, of whom nearly 16,000 were killed or missing. The Scottish Division suffered very heavily.

Imperial War Museum





A DEAD TOWN FOR SEVEN YEARS

Lens was a prosperous manufacturing town and the centre of an important mining district in 1914, but there was constant fighting around it and it was gradually reduced to ruins. It was not until the coal mines began to work again in 1921, seven years after the Germans first entered the town, that prosperity returned to it. Above, left, is the Church of St Leger, completely restored, and, right, the new railway station, one of the proudest stations today in Northern France.

Photos, A. J. Insall, copyright A.P. Ltd.

capture or hold. Near them were the pit-heads with winding-gear in elevated towers of steel which were smashed and twisted by gun fire; and in Loos itself were two of those towers joined by steel girders and gantries, called the "Tower Bridge" by men of London.

Rows of red cottages where the French miners had lived were called "corons," and where they were grouped into larger units they were called "cités," like the Cité St. Auguste, the Cité St. Pierre, and the Cité St. Laurent, beyond Hill 70, on the outskirts of Lens [see map in page 468].

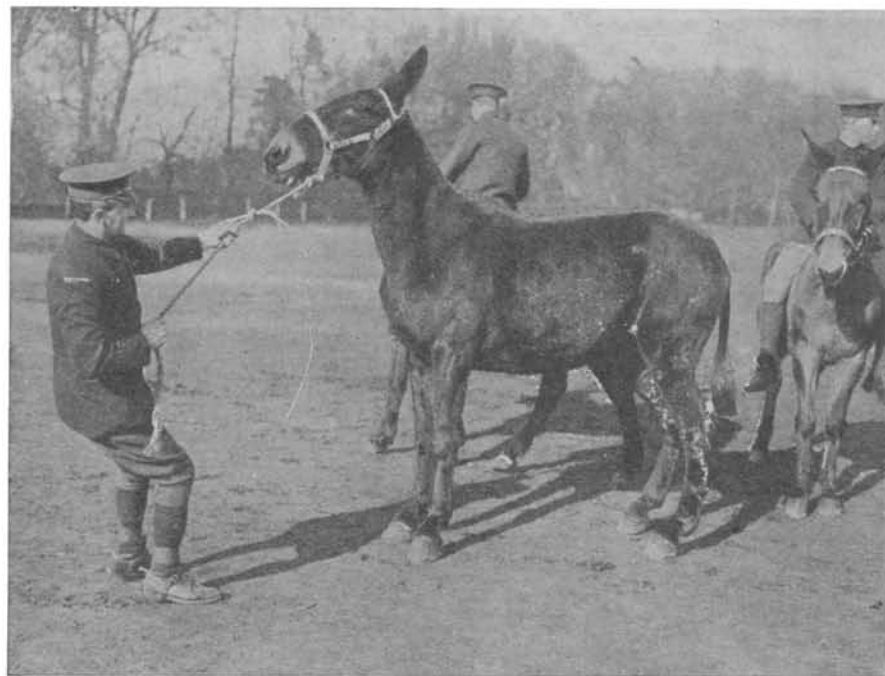
All those places were abandoned now by black-grimed men who had fled down the mine-shaft and galleries with their women and children, and had come up on our side of the lines at Noeux-les-Mines or Bruay or Bully-Grenay, where they still lived close to the war. Shells pierced the roof of the church in that squalid village of Noeux-les-Mines and smashed some of the cottages and killed some of the people now and then.

LATER in the war, when aircraft dropped bombs at night, a new peril overshadowed them with terror, and they lived in their cellars after dusk, and sometimes were buried there. But they would not retreat farther back—not many of them—and on days of battle I saw groups of French miners and dirty-bloused girls excited by the passage of our troops, and by the walking wounded who came stumbling back, and by stretcher cases unloaded from ambulances to the floors of their dirty

cottages. High-velocities fell in some of the streets, shrapnel shells whined overhead and burst like thunder-claps. Young hooligans of France slouched around with their hands in their pockets, talking to our men in a queer lingua-franca, grimacing at those noises if they did not come too near.

I saw lightly wounded girls among

them, with bandaged heads and hands, but they did not think that a reason for escape. With smoothly braided hair they gathered round British soldiers in steel hats, and clasped their arms or leaned against their shoulders. They had known many of those men before. They were their sweethearts. In those foul little mining towns the British troops had liked their billets, because of the girls there. London boys and Scots "kept company" with pretty slatterns, who stole their badges for keepsakes and taught them a base patois of French, and had a smudge of tears on their cheeks when the boys went away for a spell in the ditches of death. They



SURE-FOOTED BUT SOUR-TEMPERED

L.N.A.

Tribute has been paid in earlier chapters to the faithfulness and courage of the army horses, but of the mules there is a different story to tell. Their great redeeming quality was their sure-footedness. The mule above is typical of the hard-mouthed beasts which Sir Philip Gibbs says were sworn at and thrashed by their drivers, an attitude easily understandable when a display of mulish obstinacy took place in the heat of battle.

were kindhearted little sluts, with astounding courage.

"Aren't you afraid of this place?" I asked one of them in Bully-Grenay when it was "unhealthy" there. "You might be killed here any minute."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Je m'en fiche de la mort!" (I don't care a damn about death.) I had the same answer from other girls in other places. . . .

THAT was the *mise-en-scène* of the battle of Loos—those mining towns behind the lines, then a maze of communication trenches entered from a place called Philosophe, leading up to the trench-lines beyond Vermelles, and running northwards to Cambrin and Givenchy opposite Hulluch, Haisnes and La Bassée, where the enemy had their trenches and earthworks among the slag-heaps, the pitheads, the "corons" and the "cités," all broken by gunfire, and nowhere a sign of human life above ground in which many men were hidden.

Storms of gunfire broke loose from our batteries a week before the battle. It was our first demonstration of those stores of high-explosive shells which had been made by the speeding-up of munition work in England and of a gun power which had been growing steadily since the coming out of the New Army.

The weather was heavy with mist and a drizzle of rain. Banks of smoke made a pall over all the arena of war, and it was stabbed and torn by the incessant flash of bursting shells.

I stood on the slag-heap staring at this curtain of smoke hour after hour, dazed by the tumult of noise and by that impenetrable veil which hid all human drama. There was no movement of men to be seen, no slaughter, no heroic episode—only through rifts in the smoke the blurred edges of slag-heaps and pitheads, and smoking ruins. German trenches were being battered in, German dug-outs made into the tombs of living men, German bodies tossed up with earth and stones—all that was certain but invisible.

"Very boring," said an officer at my side. "Not a damn thing to be seen."

"Our men ought to have a walk-over," said an optimist. "Any living German must be a gibbering idiot with shell-shock."

"I expect they're playing cards in their dug-outs," said the officer who was bored.

"Even high explosives don't go down very deep."

"It's stupendous, all the same. By God, hark at that! It seems more than human. It's like some convulsion of nature."

"There's no adventure in modern war," said the bored man. "It's a dirty, scientific business. I'd kill all chemists and explosive experts."

"Our men will have adventure enough when they go over the top at dawn. Hell must be a game compared with that."

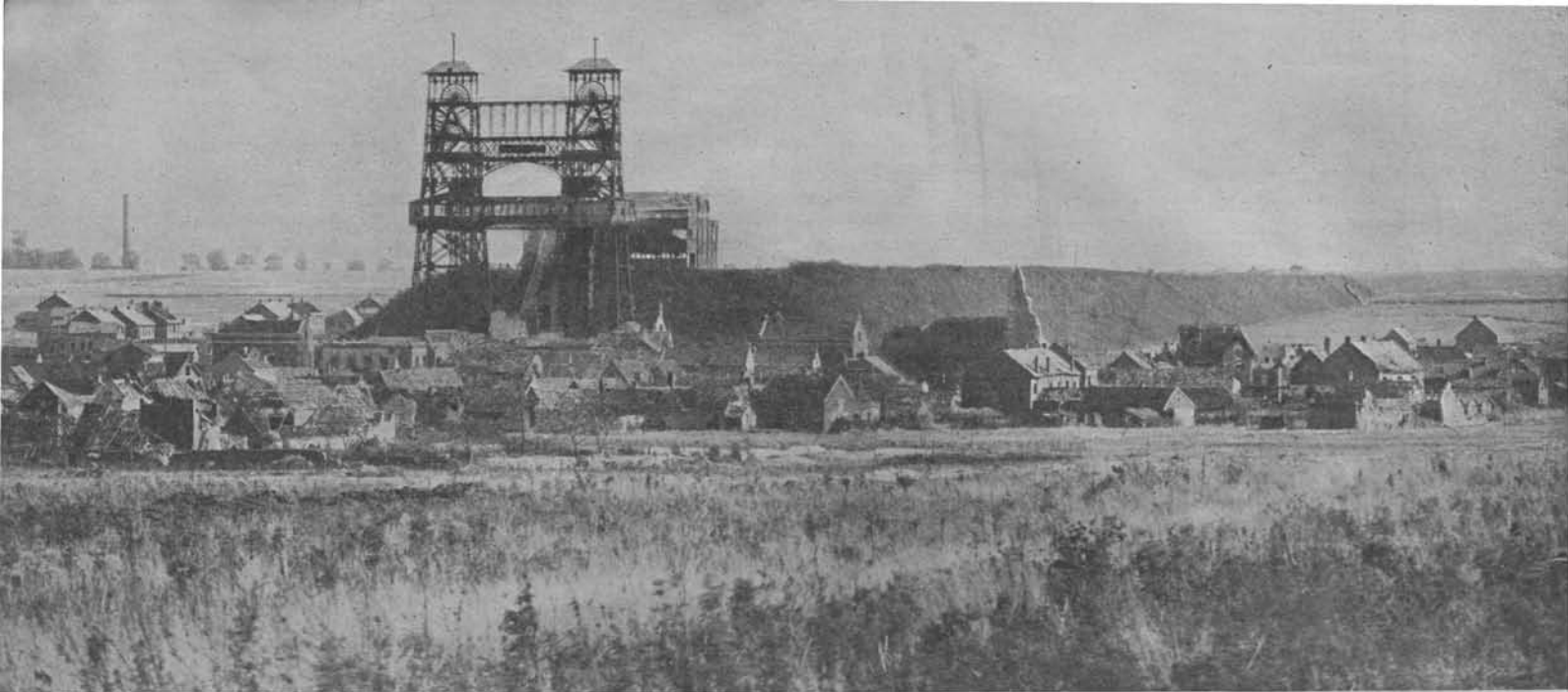
The guns went on pounding away day after day—labouring, pummelling, hammering, like Thor with his thunderbolts. It was the preparation for battle. No men were out of the trenches yet, though some were being killed there and elsewhere, at the cross-roads by Philosophe, and outside the village of Masin-garbe, and in the ruins of Vermelles. The German guns were answering back intermittently, but holding most of their fire until human flesh came out into the open. The battle began at dawn on September 25.

THIS WAS A PLACE TO BE AFRAID OF

This is the main street in Bully-Grenay, the village which is described in this page as "unhealthy," but where courageous young Frenchwomen defied death and parted with tears from the British soldiers who went out from there to fight. On the right is an advanced dressing station, sandbagged against enemy shell fire.

Imperial War Museum





LANDMARK OF LOOS

THEN AND NOW

In the early days of the battle of Loos the famous "Tower Bridge," seen also in page 458, still stood amidst a hurricane of shells, but it was finally reduced to a mass of tangled girders. Above is the village and pithead before the battle began, and right is the structure which replaced it after the war. It is necessary to introduce here, for the sake of comparison only, the photograph below (which also appeared in "World War"), for it is the only one existing which shows the village completely wrecked, with the "Tower Bridge" but slightly damaged. It was taken on September 25, 1915.

Photos, A. J. Insall, copyright A.P. Ltd., and Imperial War Museum



WITH the GUNS at LOOS

by 'F. O. O.' (Major C. J. C. Street)

THE initials F.O.O. stand for Forward Observation Officer of the artillery, and in this instance disguise the identity of a famous detective writer, Mr. John Rhode, which is the nom de plume of Major C. J. C. Street. The forward observation officer held a position of great danger and responsibility, and the author here tells his story of the preliminary bombardment before the battle of Loos. Every reader must be impressed by the vivid account which he gives of the urgency of the task of the gunners on the eve of this disastrous battle

THAT night [Sept. 24, 1915] was the lull before the storm. All along our line the restless field guns woke but fitfully, as a watch-dog to bark at the moon, and then fell off to sleep again. Even the incomparable French "soixante-quinzes" on our right, whose voices are hushed neither by day nor by night, seemed restless, impatient, restrained, keeping long silences, until in sheer desperation they burst into uncontrollable passion, ceasing again as suddenly as they began, as though appalled by their own act. Only the vivid lights soared brilliantly as ever above the trenches, failing, however, to evoke the usual salutation from their unsleeping wardens. So the morning dawned, unheralded by the noisy "morning hate" with which the opposing armies invariably greeted one another, the still air seeming to cower silently, awaiting the shocks that were to come. . . .

So as the day passes on we fall into our usual routine. The battery is seemingly uninhabited but for the strident section commanders standing between their hidden guns, except when reliefs descend into the pits as into Avernus, out of which presently appear a knot of men, dusty, grimy, and incredibly thirsty. . . .

All the time, at regular intervals, the guns fire and the orders pass. Sometimes a keener note is heard, "Left section, cease loading! Fresh target—" and a new string of orders, soon followed by a resumption of the periodic roaring, as of a thunderstorm controlled by an angel with a stop-watch. Or perhaps "Fire No. 3 gun!" and no instant report. "What's the matter, No. 3?" "Miss-fire, sir!" "All right, look sharp!" "All ready, sir!" "Fire No. 3, then!" and the rhythm commences again.

After a time it all has a strangely soothing effect on the senses. First one loses the din of the surrounding batteries, then fails to notice the report

of one's own guns a few feet away, giving orders mechanically notwithstanding. Perhaps a stifled yawn and a glance at the watch—is that infernal fellow never coming to relieve me? Then the warning voice of the telephonist, "Fresh target coming through, sir!" and the wandering attention leaps into watchfulness again.

Up at the observation post things are very different. There the observing officer sits, watching the black and yellow smoke clouds of the bursting high explosive, or the cotton-wool-like puffs of the shrapnel. "No. 1 fired, sir!" The words of the telephonists seem to come as from some other world. Here she comes, far away behind, the whistle of the shell shrieking louder as she passes right overhead—splendid! in the very trench itself; see the black smoke spread out and rise slowly from a long section of trench, while the green vegetation grows white with the falling chalk. No correction can be made to that, "No. 1, repeat!" "No. 2 fired, sir!" Here she comes, ah, a little to the right—"No. 2, ten minutes more left, fire!"

ENEMY TRENCH DISAPPEARS

So it goes on, until this particular section of trench has practically disappeared, leaving only a white scar. Then a change of target and a repetition of the destruction. A fascinating business this on so fine an autumn day, so fascinating that all sense of time is lost, all conjecture as to whether the enemy will take it into his head to select our observation post as a target is forgotten. The only thing in the world is the measured fall of the shell and the swift framing of the consequent order, the only pleasure the deep satisfaction of a well-placed round, the only despair the haunting memory of a shot wasted that might have been saved by a different procedure.

During those four days of ceaseless bombardment, the enemy made very little reply except at certain points; we

subsequently discovered why. He made no attempt to distribute his fire along our front line, nor did he make a systematic search for our observation posts, the vital organ of every battery and its most vulnerable one. Certain spots he selected, and with magnificent gunnery rendered them utterly untenable. Shell after shell fell with mathematical accuracy into Vermelles, Le Rutoire, Quality Street, but when once we had learnt these favoured spots, our casualties were very few, being avoided by the simple expedient of removing to places that appeared to be more suitable in the capacity of health-resorts, or, where that was impossible, taking to the cellars and remaining there. . . .

THE material effect of such a bombardment is harder to judge, for it must be remembered that, despite the high science of modern gunnery, the percentage of direct hits upon a given objective is still comparatively small. When, however, a heavy shell detonates under favourable conditions, its destructive power is enormous. For instance, on the third day I saw a direct hit by one of our largest howitzers upon the boiler-house of Puits XVI. The shell penetrated the roof and burst inside the building, sending up an enormous cloud of black smoke tinged with the pink of pulverized brick, that hung for several minutes. When it cleared, nothing but a gaunt and twisted framework of steel girders remained, a heap of rubbish alone showing where the walls had stood.

A smaller howitzer was ordered to fell a brick wall, some thirty feet high and many courses thick. The shell burst in regular sequence at its foot, at roughly ten yards interval, each round bringing down an equivalent section of the wall, until nothing remained but a long pile of smoking rubble. And more impressive, perhaps, than all is the sight of a medium lyddite shell bursting in a narrow trench.

Out of the centre of a vivid flash fly heavy timbers, sandbags, revetments, all that once formed the trench, sometimes the mangled fragments of its occupants, while to right and left rolls the choking smoke, driving its way into the deepest dug-outs, overcoming men many yards away from the point of impact, spreading death in every form. Is it to be wondered at that when our infantry reached these trenches they found a few survivors, living indeed still, but struggling and raving as the inmates of some ghastly Bedlam?

During the night of September 24—25, infantry patrols left the trenches to explore the condition of the enemy's



LOOS WAS A BLACK COUNTRY BATTLEFIELD

The battle of Loos, which lasted from September 25 to October 13, was fought amid the black country of north-eastern France, and Loos itself was a mining village. This photograph gives an excellent idea of the difficult ground on which the fighting took place. The slag heaps were obstacles difficult to overcome. The one on the right is a "tip" which was used as an observation post.

Imperial War Museum

wire entanglements, upon the destruction of which our field batteries had been engaged during the previous day. Artillery fire was therefore reduced as much as could be done with safety, and was chiefly directed upon reserves and billets, in order to reduce the chance of rounds falling short injuring the patrols.

During the evening the batteries opposed to us had shown far greater liveliness than they had hitherto. Possibly the enemy had got information as to where the decisive attack was to be made, as it seems to be the fact that owing to the four days' bombardment having taken place along the whole of the British front, they had hitherto hesitated to reinforce any particular sector, but had kept their reserves in a state of immediate readiness at their various railway centres. If this was the case, it is very probable that during the 23rd and 24th fresh batteries were placed in position between Vendin-le-Vieil and Lens, and that these came into action on the afternoon and evening of the 24th. This supposition is borne out by the fact of the enemy's ability to bring a terrific fire to bear on Loos as soon as we entered it.

UNTIL the light failed, we had been busily engaged dropping shell along the Double Crassier, upon whose grim black crest the enemy were suspected of having mounted a number of machine guns. I had been in the observation post nearly the whole day—it is, by the way, worthy of remark as showing the immunity from retaliation that we had enjoyed in our sector, that we used to walk to and from our O.P. [Observation Post] at all hours of the day through country literally covered with batteries,

none of whom up till now had suffered any casualties—but at about seven o'clock duty recalled me to the battery.

So absorbed had I been in the difficult business of observing in the failing light, that although I was conscious that shells were bursting all round, I had no idea that anything out of the ordinary was taking place until one of our telephonists, who had been out repairing the line, returned somewhat shaken, having been blown off his feet and thrown some distance by a high-explosive detonating close to him. His only complaint was that he had lost a pair of wire-cutters!

A VERY CLOSE SHAVE

HOWEVER, as soon as I started my walk homewards along the "Harrow Road," I found things still fairly lively. Several houses had been destroyed since the morning, and some very fine examples of shell-holes in the middle of the road added to the joys of the transport drivers, whose wagons of all descriptions were now beginning to pour along it. At one point a medium shell burst about twenty yards away from me—I had heard it coming and found friendly refuge in the ditch—and before the smoke had fairly cleared an armoured car and a motor cyclist orderly drove simultaneously into it from opposite directions. Nobody was hurt, but the road was most effectively obstructed, and the effect produced was exactly like that of a block in Piccadilly, including the language.

I reached the battery safely, to find that the shelling had not reached so far back, but that another form of excitement had supervened. We had received orders to be ready to move at the shortest possible notice, in case a general

advance upon the morrow should render a change in our position necessary. Of course, we had been prepared for this for days, but even so this official pronouncement of our hopes sent a thrill through every one of us. This was, then, the decisive struggle, the Waterloo of the campaign at last!

Moving a battery of heavy guns is, however, no small matter and one that involves a vast amount of labour, not to be lightly undertaken. A story is told of a certain major, distinguished alike for his capability and his piety, who, knowing from bitter experience the difficulties that attended a change of position of his battery, added on this night to his usual formula of prayer these heart-felt words, "O Lord, grant us victory in the coming struggle—but not in my sector!"

I think that despite the fact that the guns were silent for the first time since the beginning of the bombardment, very few of us slept much that night. Our schemes were perfect, certainly; every detail of our actions of the morrow had been long worked out, each phase starting a definite time after an empiric zero, which was now fixed for 5.50 a.m.

But—would the enemy consent to fall in with those schemes? Suppose they anticipated our offensive by an attack of their own? The wire in front of their trenches was already destroyed, even now our infantry were busy cutting wide passages through our own. How strong were they in reality? Was their passive endurance of our fire only a blind to lull us into security? These and a thousand other conjectures troubled our minds all night, and it was with a deep feeling of relief that we stood in the battery, no untoward incident having marred our plans, at 5.30 a.m. on the 25th—the eagerly awaited Day Z!

Then were the scenes at the opening of the bombardment repeated. Along our line all was again quiet, only from

our right came the distant echoes of the fighting round Souchez and the Labyrinth, a deep roar that had now been continuous for over a week. Again we sit in the telephone dug-out, tense and expectant. "Official time coming, sir!" Watches are taken out in readiness. "Five thirty-five—now!" Quarter of an hour to go! One by one we creep out to see for the last time that all is ready. One minute more—"Hook your lanyards!"—the hand ticks round—time zero—"Fire!"

This was no deliberate bombardment, every gun must in the short interval allowed it work to its utmost capacity, every man sweating in the dust-laden pits must toil as he never toiled before to feed it; into the luckless trenches in front of us must pour such a blasting hurricane of fire that the resistance prepared for our attack shall wither

away in its deadly breath. But soon our own troops will be pouring out of their trenches, charging over the dividing ground to hurl themselves upon the trenches into which our wrath is now being poured, and then our fire must be lifted lest we do more harm than good.

ALL is arranged for in the time-table. At forty minutes past zero, or 6.30 a.m., every battery lifts its fire from the front line to the second line, and still the furious fire continues. But now we know that the blow is being struck—what would we all not give to be in action in the open as in old days, so that we could see the assault, watch the joining of the battle? . . . And then suddenly came time zero, bringing with it a scene that could never be forgotten.

From the whole length of our front trench, as far as the eye could reach, rose, vertically at first, a grey cloud of smoke and gas, that, impelled by a gentle wind, spread slowly towards the enemy's trenches, very soon enveloping the whole of our range of vision in its opaque veil. This was our view of the assault, this dismal vapour the aura that was to surround a thousand sacrifices, the cloak that was to hide a thousand gallant deeds, the winding-sheet that was to enwrap so many a hero.

Modern war holds no dramatic spectacles . . . Yet none the less is its fascination omnipotent; its magnetic attraction, that draws into its vortex every man that owns a soul to plague him, is none the less irresistible; its influence still has the power to weld a chain of heroes out of a dirty, blasphemous, footsore crowd of sinners.

* 88 September 25, 1915

The HORROR that was LOOS . . .

And I Saw a Football in No Man's Land

by Patrick Macgill



MAN OF MANY PARTS

Before he joined the Army in 1914 Mr. Patrick Macgill had been a navvy and a farm worker and a research student, and had moreover by then established a growing reputation as an author.

IT was now grey day, hazy and moist, and the thick clouds of pale yellow smoke curled high in space and curtained the dawn off from the scene of war. The word was passed along. "London Irish lead on to assembly trench." The assembly trench was in front, and there the scaling ladders were placed against the parapet, ready steps to death, as someone remarked. I had a view of the men swarming up the ladders when I got there, their bayonets held in steady hands, and at a little distance off a football swinging by its whang from a bayonet standard.

The company were soon out in the open marching forward. The enemy's guns were busy, and the rifle and Maxim bullets ripped the sandbags.

The infantry fire was wild but of slight intensity. The enemy could not see the attacking party. But, judging by the row, it was hard to think that men could weather the leaden storm in the open.

The big guns were not so vehement now, our artillery had no doubt played havoc with the hostile batteries . . . I went to the foot of a ladder and got hold of a rung. A soldier in front was clambering across. Suddenly he dropped backwards and bore me to the ground; the bullet caught him in the forehead. I got to my feet to find a stranger in grey uniform coming down the ladder. He reached the floor of the trench, put up his hands when I looked at him, and cried in a weak, imploring voice, "Kamerad! Kamerad!"

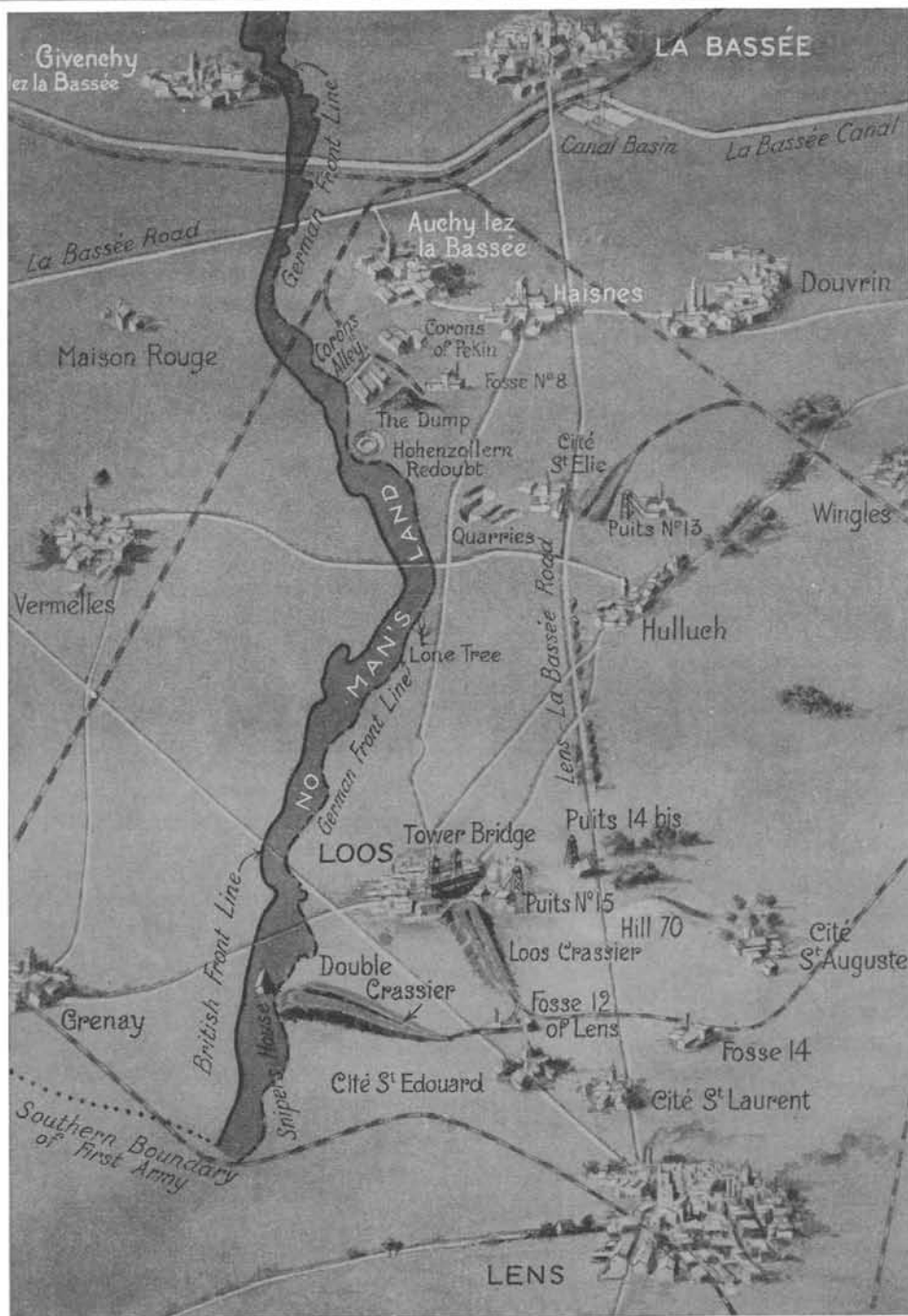
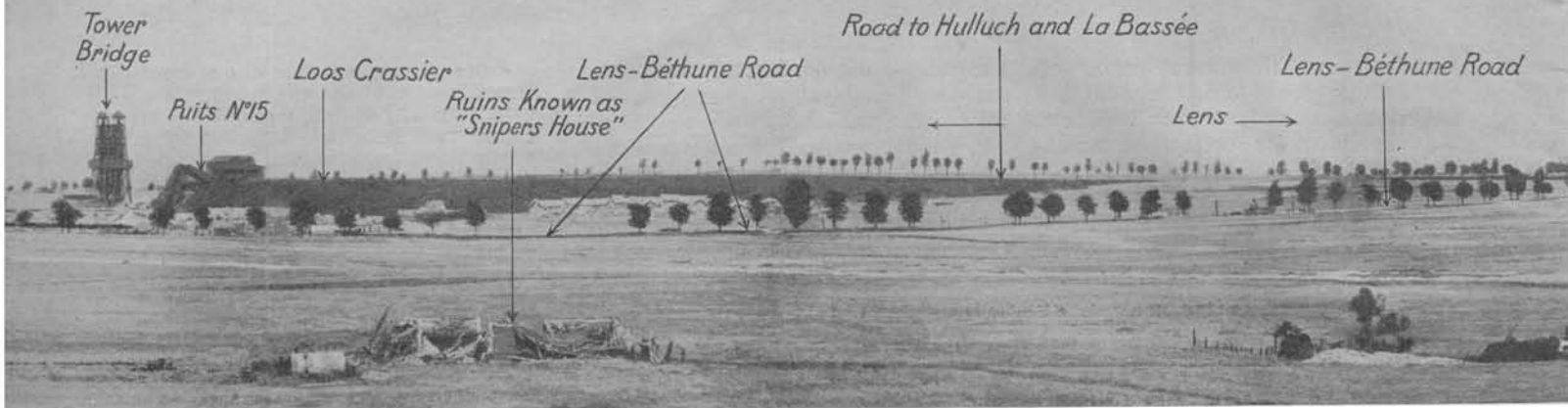
"A German!" I said to my mate.

"H'm, h'm!" he answered.

I flung my stretcher over the parapet and, followed by my comrade stretcher-bearer, I clambered up the ladder and went over the top . . .

The moment had come when it was unwise to think. The country round Loos was like a sponge; the god of war had stamped with his foot on it, and thousands of men, armed, ready to kill, were squirted out on to the level, barren fields of danger. To dwell for a moment on the novel position of being standing where a thousand deaths swept by, missing you by a mere hair's-breadth, would be sheer folly. There on the open field of death my life was out of my keeping, but the sensation of fear never entered my being. There was so much simplicity and so little effort in doing what I had done, in doing what eight hundred comrades had done, that I felt I could carry through the work before me with as much credit as my code of self-respect required.

The Maxims went crackle like dry brushwood under the feet of a marching host. A bullet passed very close to my face like a sharp, sudden breath; a second hit the ground in front, flicked up a little shower of dust, and ricocheted



THE BATTLEFIELD OF LOOS

The top photograph gives a panoramic view of that part of the battlefield of Loos which lies between Loos and Lens, while above is a contour map of the whole battlefield,

to the left, hitting the earth many times before it found a resting place. The air was vicious with bullets; a million invisible birds flicked their wings very close to my face. Ahead the clouds of smoke, sluggish low-lying fog, and fumes of bursting shells, thick in volume, receded towards the German trenches, and formed a striking background for the soldiers who were marching up a low slope towards the enemy's parapet, which the smoke still hid from view.

There was no haste in the forward move, every step was taken with regimental precision, and twice on the way across the Irish boys halted for a moment to correct their alignment. Only at a point away on the right there was some confusion and a little irregularity. Were the men wavering? No fear! The boys on the right were dribbling the elusive football towards the German trench.

Raising the stretcher, my mate and I went forward. For the next few minutes I was conscious of many things. A slight rain was falling; the smoke and fumes I saw had drifted back, exposing a dark streak on the field of green, the enemy's trench. A little distance away from me three men hurried forward, and two of them carried a box of rifle ammunition. One of the bearers fell flat to earth, his two mates halted for a moment, looked at the stricken boy, and seemed to puzzle at something. Then they caught hold of the box hangers and rushed forward. The man on the ground raised himself and looked after his mates, then sank down again to the wet ground.

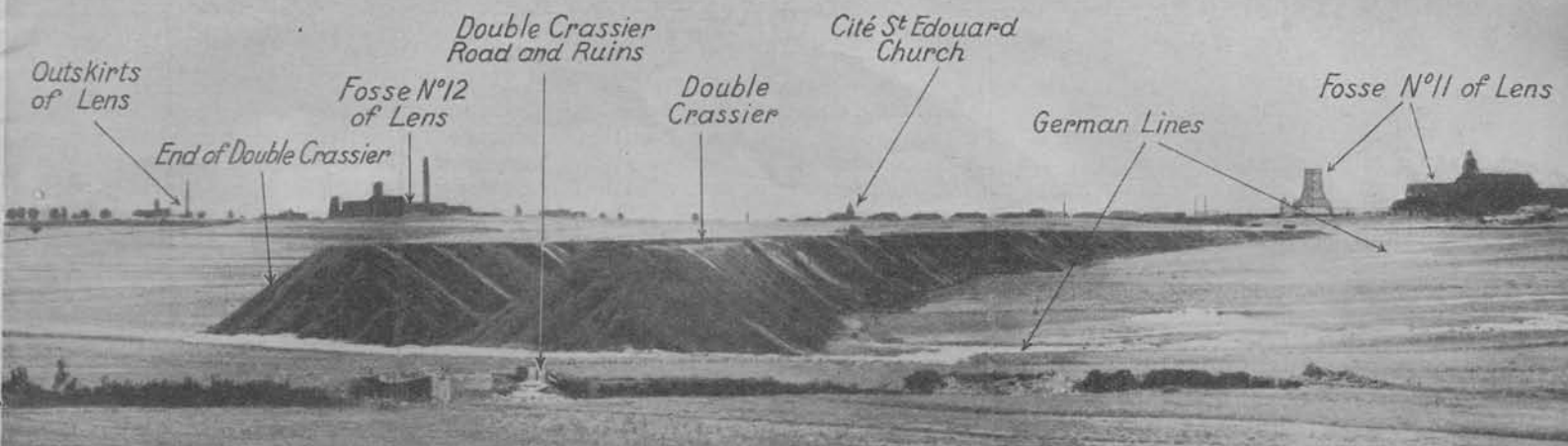
Another soldier came crawling towards us on his belly, looking for all the world like a gigantic lobster which had escaped from its basket. His lower lip was cut clean to the chin and hanging apart; blood welled through the muddy khaki trousers where they covered the hips.

I recognized the fellow.

"Much hurt, matey?" I asked.

"I'll manage to get in," he said.

"Shall I put a dressing on?"



"I'll manage to get into our own trench," he stammered, spitting the blood from his lips. "There are others out at the wire. S—— has caught it bad. Try and get him in, Pat."

"Right, old man," I said, as he crawled off. "Good luck."

My cap was blown off my head as if by a violent gust of wind, and it dropped on the ground. I put it on again, and at that moment a shell burst near at hand and a dozen splinters sang by my ear. I walked forward with a steady step.

"What took my cap off?" I asked myself. "It went away just as if it was caught in a breeze. God!" I muttered, in a burst of realization. "It was that shell passing." I breathed very deeply, my blood rushed down to my toes and an airy sensation filled my body. Then the stretcher dragged.

"Lift the damned thing up," I called to my mate over my shoulder. There was no reply. I looked round to find him gone, either mixed up in a whooping rush of kilted Highlanders, who had lost their objective and were now charging parallel to their own trench, or perhaps he got killed. . . . How strange that the Highlanders could not charge in silence, I thought, and then recollected that most of my boyhood friends, Donegal lads, were in Scottish regiments. . . . I placed my stretcher on my shoulder, walked forward towards a bank of smoke, and came across our platoon sergeant and part of his company.

"ARE we going wrong, or are the Jocks wrong?" he asked his men, then shouted, "Lie flat, boys, for a minute, until we see where we are. There's a big crucifix in Loos churchyard, and we've got to draw on that."

The men threw themselves flat; the sergeant went down on one knee and leant forward on his rifle, his hands on the bayonet standard, the fingers pointing upwards and the palms pressed close to the sword which was covered with rust. . . . How hard it would be to draw it from a dead body! . . . The sergeant seemed to be kneeling in prayer. . . . In front the cloud cleared away, and the

black crucifix standing over the graves of Loos became revealed.

"Advance, boys!" said the sergeant. "Steady on to the foot of the Cross and rip the swine out of their trenches."

The Irish went forward. . . .

A shell struck the ground in front, burrowed, and failed to explode.

Men and pieces of men were lying all over the place. A leg, an arm, then again a leg, cut off at the hip. A finely formed leg, the latter, gracefully putteed. A dummy leg in a tailor's window could not be more graceful. It might be X; he was an artist in dress, a Beau Brummel in khaki. Fifty yards farther along I found the rest of X. . . .

The harrowing sight was repellent, antagonistic to my mind. The tortured things lying at my feet were symbols of insecurity, ominous reminders of danger from which no discretion could save a man. My soul was barren of pity; fear went down into the innermost parts of me, fear for myself. The dead and dying lay all around me; I felt a vague obligation to the latter; they must be carried out. But why should I trouble! Where could I begin? Everything was so far apart. I was too puny to start my labours in such a derelict world. . . .

THE COCKNEY'S 'KAMERAD'

A FIGURE in grey, a massive block of Bavarian bone and muscle, came running towards me . . . and Bill Teake following him with a long bayonet.

"A prisoner!" yelled the boy on seeing me. "'Kamerad! Kamerad!' 'e shouted when I came up. Blimey! I couldn't stab 'im, so I took 'im prisoner. It's not 'arf a Barney! . . . 'Ave yer got a fag ter spare?"

The Cockney came to a halt, reached for a cigarette, and lit it.

The German stood still, panting like a dog. "Double, Fritz! Double!" shouted the boy, sending a little puff of smoke through his nose. "Over to our trench you go! Grease along if yer don't want a bayonet in your—"

They rushed off, the German with hands in air, and Bill behind with his bayonet perilously close to the prisoner.

There was something amusing in the incident, and I could not refrain from laughing. Then I got a whiff from a German gas-bomb which exploded near me, and I began spluttering and coughing. The irritation, only momentary, was succeeded by a strange humour. I felt as if walking on air, my head got light, and it was with difficulty that I kept my feet on earth. It would be so easy to rise into space and float away.

The sensation was a delightful one; I felt so pleased with myself, with everything. A wounded man lay on the ground, clawing the earth with frenzied fingers. In a vague way I remembered some ancient law which ordained me to assist a stricken man. But I could not do so now; the action would clog my buoyancy and that delightful feeling of freedom which permeated my being. Another soldier whom I recognized, even at a distance, by his pink-and-white bald pate, so often a subject for our jokes, reeled over the bloodstained earth, his eyes almost bursting from their sockets.

"You look bad," I said to him, with a smile. He stared at me drunkenly, but did not answer.

A MAN, mother-naked, raced round in a circle, laughing boisterously. The rags that would class him as a friend or foe were gone, and I could not tell whether he was an Englishman or a German. As I watched him an impartial bullet went through his forehead and he fell headlong to the earth. The sight sobered me . . .

Up near the German wire I found our company postman sitting in a shell-hole, a bullet in his leg below the knee and an unlighted cigarette in his mouth. "You're the man I want!" he shouted, on seeing me. And I fumbled in my haversack for bandages.

"No dressing for me yet," he said, with a smile. "There are others needing help more than I. What I want is a match." As I handed him my match-box a big, high-explosive shell flew over our heads and dropped fifty yards away in a little hollow where seven or eight figures in khaki lay prostrate, faces to

the ground. The shell burst and the wounded and dead rose slowly into air to a height of six or seven yards and dropped slowly again, looking for all the world like puppets worked by wires.

"This," said the postman, who had observed the incident, "is a solution of a question which diplomacy could not settle, I suppose. The last argument of kings is a damned sorry business."

By the German barbed wire entanglements were the shambles of war. Here our men were seen by the enemy for the first time that morning. Up till then the foe had fired erratically through the oncoming curtain of smoke; but when the cloud cleared away the attackers were seen advancing, picking their way through the wires which had been cut to little pieces by our bombardment. The Irish were now met with harrying rifle fire, deadly petrol bombs and hand grenades. Here I came across dead, dying and sorely wounded; lives maimed and finished, and all the romance and roving that makes up the life of a soldier gone for ever. Here, too, I saw, bullet-riddled, against one of the spider webs known as chevaux de frise, a limp lump of pliable leather, the football which the boys had kicked across the field.

A MAN BEYOND HOPE

I came across Flannery lying close to a barbed wire support, one arm round it as if in embrace. He was a clumsily built fellow, with queer, bushy eyebrows and a short, squat nose. His bearing was never soldierly, but on a march he could bear any burden and stick the job when more alert men fell out. He always bore himself, however, with a certain grace, due, perhaps, to a placid belief in his own strength. He never made friends; a being apart, he led a solitary life. Now he lay close to earth hugging an entanglement prop, and dying.

There was something savage in the expression of his face as he looked slowly round, like an ox under a yoke, on my approach. I knelt down beside him and cut his tunic with my scissors where a burnt hole clotted with blood showed under the kidney. A splinter of shell had torn part of the man's side away. All hope was lost for the poor soul.

"In much pain, chummy?" I asked.

"Ah, Christ! Yes, Pat," he answered. "Wife and two kiddies, too. Are we getting the best of it?"

I did not know how the fight was progressing, but I had seen a line of bayonets drawing near to the second trench out by Loos.

"Winning all along," I answered.

"That's good," he said. "Is there any hope for me?"

"Of course there is, matey," I lied.

"You have two of these morphia tablets and lie quiet. We'll take you in after a while, and you'll be back in England in two or three days' time."

I placed the morphia under his tongue and he closed his eyes as if going to sleep. Then, with an effort, he tried to get up and gripped the wire support with such vigour that it came clean out of the ground. His legs shot out from under him, and, muttering something about rations being fit for pigs and not men, he fell back and died.

The fighting was not over in the front trench yet, the first two companies had gone ahead, the other two companies were taking possession here. A sturdy Bavarian in shirt and pants was standing on a banquette with his bayonet over the parapet, and a determined look in his eyes. He had already done for two of our men as they tried to cross, but now his rifle seemed to be unloaded and he waited. Standing there amid his dead countrymen he formed a striking figure. A bullet from one of our rifles would have ended his career speedily, but no one seemed to want to fire that shot. There was a moment of suspense, broken only when the monstrous futility of resistance became apparent to him, and he threw down his rifle and put up his hands, shouting "Kamerad! Kamerad!" I don't know what became of him afterwards.

Four boys rushed up, panting under the machine-gun and ammunition belts which they carried. One got hit and fell to the ground, the Maxim tripod which he carried fell on top of him. The remainder of the party came to a halt.

"Lift the tripod and come along," his mates shouted to one another.

"Who's goin' to carry it?" asked a little fellow with a box of ammunition.

"You," came the answer.

"Some other one must carry it," said the little fellow. "I've the heaviest burden."

"You've not," one answered. "Get the blurry thing on your shoulder."

"Blurry yourself!" said the little fellow. "Someone else carry the thing. Marney can carry it!"

"I'm not a damned fool!" said Marney. "It can stick there 'fore I take it across."

"Not much good goin' over without it," said the little fellow.

I left them there wrangling; the extra weight would have made no appreciable difference to any of them.

It was interesting to see how the events of the morning had changed the nature of the boys. Mild-mannered youths who had spent their working hours of civil life in scratching with inky pens on white paper, and their hours of relaxation in cutting capers on roller skates and helping dainty maidens to teas and ices, became possessed of mad Berserker rage and ungovernable fury. Now that their work was war, the bloodstained bayonet gave them play in which they seemed to glory.

"Here's one that I've just done in," I heard M'Crone shout, looking approvingly at a dead German. "That's five of the bloody swine now."

HE SOON LEARNT TO SWEAR

M'CRONE's mother never sends her son any money lest he gets into the evil habit of smoking cigarettes. He is of a religious turn of mind and delights in singing hymns, his favourite being, "There is a green hill far away." I never heard him swear before, but at Loos his language would make a navvy in a Saturday night taproom green with envy. M'Crone was not lacking in courage. I have seen him wait for death with untroubled front in a shell-harried trench, and now, inflicting pain on others, he was a fiend personified; such transformations are of common occurrence on the field of honour.

The German trench had suffered severely from our fire; parapets were blown in, and at places the trench was full to the level of the ground with sandbags and earth. Wreckage was strewn all over the place, rifles, twisted distortions of shapeless metal, caught by high-velocity shells, machine-guns smashed to atoms, bomb-proof shelters broken to pieces like houses of cards; giants had been at work of destruction.

ON the reverse slope of the parapet, broken tins, rusty swords, muddied equipments, wicked-looking coils of barbed wire, and discarded articles of clothing were scattered about pell-mell. I noticed an unexploded shell perched on a sandbag, cocking a perky nose in air, and beside it was a battered helmet, the brass glory of its regal eagle dimmed with trench mud and wrecked with many a bullet...

I had a clear personal impression of man's ingenuity for destruction when my eyes looked on the German front line where our dead lay in peace with their fallen enemies on the parapet. At the bottom of the trench the dead lay thick, and our boys, engaged in building a new parapet, were heaping the sandbags on the dead men and consolidating the captured position.



THEY WERE CAUGHT IN THE OPEN

Here the tide of battle has swept on, leaving a trail of wreckage behind it. The scene is the Loos-Vermelles road looking towards Loos. On the left are the remains of the wrecked transport and machine-gun limbers of the 21st and 24th Divisions which were caught in the open and heavily shelled. On the extreme right can be seen the remains of an old German communication trench with the "knife-rest" type of barbed-wire entanglement such as is seen in page 486. Part of "Tower Bridge" (see page 458) is visible on the left.

Imperial War Museum

LOOS: The HOPELESS MAZE of BATTLE

My Men Were Covered in Clay and Blood

by John Easton

THE author of this narrative, John Easton, was a second-lieutenant in the 12th Battalion Royal Fusiliers at the battle of Loos. Like many others who have written their war reminiscences, he has preferred to use the third person—disguising himself and his comrades under fictitious names. But the Broadchalk who is the author of this story pays magnificent tribute to their memory

At first the din of the bursting shells drove the platoon into its funk-holes: the parapet shook, and chunks of earth fell down into the trench through the vibration. But soon it became apparent that there was little except noise to fear; the fuses were too short and the shrapnel was bursting too high: also the shells were made of very inferior stuff. Large chunks of a red-hot coke-like substance landed in the trench, and the men passed their time in seeing who could pick up the largest and hottest piece. One of these chunks landed on Broadchalk's head and hurt him less than a well-aimed clump of turf: another, a jagged piece of metal this time, tore a hole in the peak of his cap—a nastier customer altogether. . . .

THE remaining three hours before dawn were cheerless, cold and dreary. Broadchalk's eyelids were heavy; a misty drizzle of rain accentuated the cold; there was nothing to wait for now except the German attack. That it would succeed was out of the question; the main hope was that they would come thick and straight and in the open; there were too many damned obstacles on the left front. Every man acted as sentry unbidden. Broadchalk inspected rifles—for the damp clay tended to clog the bolts—and dropped a hint or two. "Aim low and pick your men; you've plenty of time. They can't rush you. If they look like reaching the wire, get out and go for them. Don't wait for orders."

He looked at his watch. It was half-past four. "Stand to!" he shouted. If only he had a machine-gun now. . . .

THEY came as large shadows in the grey mist that hung over the earth; they ran diagonally across the front, each man for himself; they ran as men who have never seen a running track; some in spiked helmets, some in fatigue

caps; and they fell one by one. A fat man, hit in the leg, hopped back to their trenches with the help of a fatter friend, their arms entwined about each other's necks. A bullet hit the friend in the rear; he leaped into the air and bowled over his comrade.

Of that first line half-a-dozen reached the shelter of the houses and dropped into Corons Alley, a shallow trench on Trevor's [a fellow subaltern] left. The men had fired as one shoots at a fair, with yells of laughter and cheers—some firing from the shoulder.

ATTACKS SHOT TO NOTHING

AGAIN a second line; again that melting away, again half-a-dozen men reached the trench.

A third attack, shot to nothing before it had reached its own wire.

"Wouldn't you like a shot, sir?" asked Private Brig solemnly, offering his rifle.

Broadchalk, who had two fronts to watch and was jumping backwards and forwards in an attempt to miss nothing on either, shook his head with a smile.

"That's given them something to think about," he mused. He was worried about those dozen men who had reached the communication trench and could only hope that Trevor had got them.

"Am an' eggs is what I'd like," said Private Millet. "And more heggs than 'am! Did yer see me 'it that fat 'Un in the bum?"

"I saw yer knock that bloody weather-cock off the church steeple."

"And me the coffee, and keep yer thumb out of the saucer."

BBROADCHALK moved down the line to see Morell (his company commander) and report. Things were not going too well on the left. Trevor's platoon had had the same success as Number Eight [platoon], but against that uncertain flank the Germans had

attacked in great numbers, and it was impossible to judge to what extent they had been held up.

Broadchalk found Morell worried but cheery. "We'll get the guns on to those houses," he said. "I'll come along with you and see the Second in Command. Keep an eye out for snipers, and watch the windows of the houses." They worked their way back slowly, for the trench was narrow.

Ennis [a fellow subaltern] joined Broadchalk, and they sat side by side discussing the situation. The snipers were making the most of their chances. The two platoons of "A" Company had lost their only subaltern, shot through the head; Aubrey had been wounded between the eyes and had been taken back to the rear, temporarily blind.

As the morning dragged on things became hotter. The bombardment was incessant, and under its cover small parties of Germans made their way over towards the left flank, offering but a glimpse of a target. Men began to fall fast, though Number Eight bore charmed lives.

By eleven o'clock the Germans had occupied a large stretch of trench between Trevor and the remnants of the Northants; they were separated from him only by a traverse of sand-bags and earth which he had hastily thrown up and manned with the one Lewis gun available. And then the British guns opened, not on to the houses, nor on that stretch of trench occupied by the Germans, but slap on to Trevor! They knocked his trench to pieces and decimated his platoon.

Sergeant-Major Bakewell, an old spindle-legged veteran regular from South Africa, set out alone for the rear to get into touch with the gunners and stop their havoc. When it was obvious that he had been hit, Ennis followed, making for the Dump, in the hope of finding an Observation Officer. Instead he found a major, sitting on a pile of slag, swearing softly under his breath. His eyes lit up at the sight of Ennis.

"Can you tell me where the 73rd Brigade are?" he asked. Ennis explained that he belonged to it.

"Thank God! I'm your new Brigadier, and I've just arrived." They moved off together.

By this time the right had been driven in: the Germans had seized Slag Alley and the frontal defences of the Dump.

Broadchalk, thrust forward like a wedge, with a range of sight less than two hundred yards all told, was oblivious of what was happening to right and left. He concentrated on keeping down the snipers, checking any advances across his field of fire, and repairing the havoc



HE PIPED THE REGIMENT TO VICTORY AND WON THE V.C. AT HILL 70

The very finest bravery was shown by Piper Daniel Laidlaw of the 7th Battalion King's Own Scottish Borderers during the attack on Hill 70. His regiment was severely gassed while waiting to open the attack, and, seeing the men were shaken, Piper Laidlaw mounted the parapet and marched up and down piping "Blue Bonnets over the Border," until he was wounded. The regiment rallied and charged forward like men inspired. Piper Laidlaw was awarded the V.C. He lives to tell the tale and still has his historic pipes. He figured prominently in the famous film of the Great War, "Forgotten Men." Left, he is seen in 1915 and below as he is today.

In the photograph at the foot of the page men of the 1st Welsh Guards are moving forward to the action at Hill 70 at which Piper Laidlaw won his V.C. On their way to Hill 70 they passed along the Vermelles Road seen in page 471.

Photos, Topical and Imperial War Museum



played by the German guns in his trenches. Things were getting more and more lively; there was no time to be tired, hungry or thirsty: they worked hard, getting ready for the great attack that seemed imminent.

The British guns had lifted. One great salvo landed full on a large house to Broadchalk's left front, and the whole front of it fell away like a theatre curtain, showing a solid wedge of German infantry, packed tight in each room like woodlice under an old plank. Another salvo sent them hurtling for their lives, jumping to the ground from the second storey.

BROADCHALK'S platoon emptied its magazines into them, for they had no cover, and few of them survived to crawl back into safety.

Into this medley of shrapnel and bullets Morell came running down the trench. "Get your men out, Mr. Broadchalk," he shouted. "You're cut off! Get those men out of that trench and make for the rear."

"A" Company, left officerless, looked up in bewilderment.

Broadchalk jumped on to the parapet. "You get those men out; I'll look after Number Eight," shouted Morell. "Come along, men, hurry up."

The appearance of Broadchalk was the signal for the German infantry to open fire: it was the first real target they had had. Behind him the walls splattered and hissed with the smack of bullets: he felt them whizz past his head and body. For fifty yards he ran, shouting to the men, hauling one up by the hand; then he cut suddenly through one of the houses and came into the garden beyond, almost tumbling into Morell, who was running between the houses with what men from Number Eight he had been able to collect.

THERE was no time to lose. The front German line was rushing over; the Germans on the left had driven in Trevor, and were racing to close the gap: from the Dump there came the slow relentless pop of the Hotchkiss.

At the corner of the houses they parted company. "Get back to the trenches behind the Dump and hold them at all costs," panted Morell. "I'll see if I can do anything over here." He ran off in the direction of the trenches that the Sussex had been holding in front of the Dump.

The machine-guns had cut "A" Company to pieces. The Second in Command, a sporting colonel of the old school who had retired before South Africa, was riddled with bullets as he cleared the men out of their trenches; Broadchalk, with the remnants, set out to thread

the narrow neck of the bottle—a long strip of ground six hundred yards long—lined on one side by the Dump and on the other by the houses. The Germans were swarming; if they had thrown a line across the gap it would have been impossible to get through. A few rushed out from a house, but made off at the show of the bayonet; one fellow fired point-blank at Broadchalk from a doorway and missed him.

They ran and walked in spasms, keeping a semblance of a line, ready to turn if they were pursued. Somehow they slipped through the gap, and came out twenty strong. Broadchalk had a bullet through the heel of his boot and another through his cap; Sergeant Piper had gone, Private Brig, Private Millett, Corporal Hammett; Morell, Aubrey and, it seemed, Ennis and Trevor.

"They got Mr. Trevor, sir," panted the man at his side.

As they came level with the Dump they saw in front of them, running from north to south, Dump Trench in the old German line, packed with the khaki balmorals of the Ninth Division. They jumped into a small communication trench with a sigh of relief. . . .

COMFORT IN MAD CONFUSION

As they scurried along that communication trench in the direction of the balmorals a field message was handed down, passing from man to man; Broadchalk opened it eagerly.

"The Major-General commanding the—th Division has the situation in hand. The Seventy-third Brigade will retire and occupy the trenches dug for them on the right." (Quoted from memory.) There was a strange sense of comfort in the words. Broadchalk's confidence, during that dash for safety, had been on the wane; now to his confused and stupefied mind there came order once more; things were moving according to plan, a general had the situation in hand—he found himself marvelling at the efficiency of any man who could control such a turmoil and make his dispositions on a leaf torn out of a Field Service Pocket Book. He sent the message to the rear, in the hope that it would reach Morell.

Suddenly the trench was jammed and further progress was impossible. Broadchalk, who was in the rear of his men, jumped out of the trench and ran forward to see what the matter was. He found a couple of Scots sentries, their bayonets at the present, engaged in a heated altercation with one of his lance-corporals.

"They won't let us through, sir."

A subaltern was standing behind the Scots sentries.

"What in the hell does this mean?" asked Broadchalk.

The subaltern shrugged his shoulders. "My instructions are not to let anybody pass down this communication trench without a written order," he said.

Broadchalk saw red. "Damn it," he cried. "You passed the written order down to us yourself, not two minutes ago."

The subaltern shrugged his shoulders and murmured something unintelligible.

"Where's your company commander?" gasped Broadchalk. On getting no answer he stared helplessly about him. The small trench was hopelessly jammed.

A fresh batch of Fusiliers and Sussex, who had worked their way back from the Dump, were clustering in a knot in the rear, and even as Broadchalk noticed them a German machine-gun from one of the houses snapped greedily at the morsel set before it, and, having wiped out the group, started to work systematically up the trench. He doubled back and rallied the survivors. "Come on," he shouted. "Out of that, quick."

They sprang forward once more, and doubled across the British front for a hundred yards.

"Here ye are, laddies!" bawled out a voice. It was from a giant Scots sergeant.

They scrambled into the trench, and found themselves among friends—the remnants of the Black Watch they had relieved on Saturday night.

"Well done, the Fusiliers!" boomed the voice. "Man, ye've held a tight corner fine."

They passed along that front line, which was packed tight with men, so that packs stuck and bodies must be jammed against the trench in order to make a passage

HERE and there was a semblance of order, where the supports had had two days to organize, and had been watching the grim drama being enacted at the Fosse.

In one such stretch of trench Broadchalk found some officers. "Have you seen anything of the Fusiliers—73rd Brigade?" he asked.

"I think there are some up on the left. You'd better collect your fellows and stow them behind somewhere. We're hopelessly overcrowded as it is, and you've had your whack."

Broadchalk took the hint. It had been an awful job, squashing his way through that jammed mass of men: obviously they were not wanted. It would give him a chance to organize them, and see how many were left. . . .



IN REMEMBRANCE OF A COMRADE

After a battle there was often no time to bury decently the bodies of the fallen, and many were hurriedly placed together in common, shallow graves. But some of the British dead, when circumstances allowed, were found a resting place in French churchyards, as seen in this photograph. When the war ended, these graves, like those in the fighting areas, were opened and re-interment was made in the great war cemeteries in France. The French style of the wreath and the spelling show that the tribute is a local French product.



FROM THE DARKNESS OF BATTLE THEY PASS TO SUNLIT PAVÉ AND REST

The battle of Loos was a terrific test of the tenacity and fighting spirit of the British troops who were engaged in that great assault which forced the Germans to fall back and leave the little mining village when the offensive was sprung upon them. In this photograph (right) a column of infantry is seen marching at ease over the pavé of a village street, on their way to a rest camp after the fighting round Loos was over. The expressions on the faces of these heroic men, weary and dour after hours of terrible combat, tell something of the strain through which they have passed. Some other troops are fortunate enough to travel by ancient buses.

Imperial War Museum





THEY CAME ALIVE OUT OF THE MUD AND HORROR OF LOOS

In the assault upon the village of Loos which opened on September 25, 1915, soldiers of the Old Army, the New Army and also the Territorials went forward together after the enemy's lines and strongholds had been smashed and hammered by a gigantic bombardment. It was a battle of intense ferocity in which bayonets, hand-grenades and gas, as well as rifles and machine-guns, took a terrible toll. Then Loos, with its mines, slag heaps and shattered houses fell into British hands. Here (left) are some of the gallant men who helped to make the capture. Wounded, bedraggled and mud-caked, they are about to entrain for a base hospital.

L.N.A.





Daily Mirror

A BRITISH HEROINE COMES HOME

The tragic death of Nurse Cavell, described by Mr. Brand Whitlock in Chapter 92, made her a national heroine, and in May 1919 her body was exhumed and brought to England for a public funeral with full military honours. After a memorial service in Westminster Abbey, she was buried in the precincts of Norwich Cathedral, for she was born in Norfolk. The photograph shows the gun carriage with its escort passing along Victoria Street on its way to the Abbey.

LOOS: The ENEMY ATTACKS

We were in a Tight Corner

by John Easton

THE author, who in Chapter 89 told a haunting story of the German attack at Loos on September 27, here continues his narrative of the fateful hours. He writes in the third person, giving himself the pseudonym Broadchalk, and tells of as thrilling adventures as were ever penned by a survivor of the Great War, and one of its most disastrous battles. His battalion was the 12th Royal Fusiliers, brigaded with the 9th Royal Sussex, the 7th Northants and the 13th Middlesex, forming the 73rd Brigade, 24th Division, all of which units are referred to in his narrative

BROADCHALK stood on the firing step and surveyed his men.

They were a queer score of ragamuffins: clay-covered figures, streaked with grime and blood: their rifles clay-splashed; their puttees, like brown paper leggings, stuck fast to their shins; their boots great paws of hard mud. There were Fusiliers, Sussex, and Middlesex of his own Brigade, and half a dozen Scotsmen who had lost their units in the first advance and fought ever since wherever they could find a man to lead them.

A Middlesex sergeant got them into shape and divided them into two sections.

Broadchalk climbed on to the top of the redoubt and took stock of the position.

BEFORE him lay the village [of Auchy], now wrapt in a thick mist which was swirling towards them: the first damp of its drizzle fanned his face as he watched. Half right the ill-omened Dump loomed out of the mist, a grey formless monstrosity, full of the mystery that is inseparable from territory unsurveyed. What secrets might not be hidden in that mighty heap of slag? Rumour mentioned a tunnel and a shaft, by means of which the German gunners had fixed up observation posts before the battle with impunity: by means of which German infantry, having lured the British into a false sense of acquired possession, attacked and bombed them from the rear. Now it lay with all its mystery unsolved, apparently in German hands again. Where was that line of trenches that had been dug for them on the right?

Broadchalk's lateral vision was limited to a hundred yards each way, even though he was standing on a pinnacle of the parapet. He felt strangely naked when standing on the top of the trenches in full view of the enemy.

The mist was getting thicker and thicker: was it to be their saviour, or was it to form a bank of cloud behind which the enemy could advance in mass? The Scotsmen were running no risk, for they kept up a steady fire: Broadchalk hauled his men out of the redoubt and gave them a bout of firing: it steadied them, and caused no danger to defenders of the trench which was in front, for they were on higher ground.

Suddenly he saw two figures standing together some sixty yards to his left. He stopped, looked again, and his heart leapt within him: it was Trevor [a fellow subaltern whom he had thought killed]—Trevor, talking to Parsons, the commander of "C" Company.

The whole of Broadchalk's responsibility dropped from his shoulders simultaneously with his first muttered gasp of joy. He shouted to his men, and set out at a run.

"What are you running for?" asked Trevor cheerfully, as Broadchalk arrived panting at his side. . . .

DEATH OF A HERO

THE next hour was a nightmare of muddle and confusion. Parsons had lost his company, and had taken up his position on the parapet as the only field officer known to be alive in the area.

He was a big man, nearly stone deaf, and the enemy was barely two hundred yards away—to get orders was no mean feat: Broadchalk stood on his toes and shouted in his ear, and the snipers' bullets whizzed past his head continuously.

The organization of the line and the check of any suspicion of a rout was largely due to Parsons: he stood on the top of the trenches with his arms folded, a great monument of a man, collecting the men as they were driven in and guiding them to this or that

trench. A faint smile played over his lips and hinted at the deaf man's oblivion to rattle and noise, or the infection of shaken nerves.

Broadchalk told him about the field message. "You two had better prospect for a gap, and if you find it stay there. You can't do anything here, we're jammed solid as it is. If you find my company let me know!"

Ten minutes later he fell, shot through the head.

PARSONS was right about the jam: it was even worse up on the left than opposite the Dump. For hours Trevor and Broadchalk wandered in that hopeless maze of trenches: soaked by the drizzle, cold, hungry, thirsty and tired: above all, unwanted. Once there was an attack: they lined the top of a redoubt and fired at the faint outlines that emerged from the mist, stumbled and came no farther; once they were gassed—in a communication trench—and stood waiting in semi-yellow fog, striving to peer through the clouded mica windows of their helmets, ready to jump out and rush at any enemy that might appear in its wake; once, in a rush forward through shrapnel and machine-gun fire—for they had abandoned groping in that maze of trench and moved in the open—Broadchalk felt a terrific blow on the left shoulder and was knocked clean backwards off his feet.

"They've got me this time," he said to Trevor, who was standing over him.

"Where?"

"In the arm. I can't move it."

They dragged him to his feet, and Trevor took out his knife.

"What are you going to do?"

"Cut the sleeve off and tie you up," said Trevor.

"It's—it's not bleeding," answered Broadchalk. "Leave it alone for a bit."

He staggered forward, with his arm hanging limp by his side.

"Must have been a ricochet got me on the shoulder-strap."

A couple of men fell. A bullet crashed into Trevor's field-glasses, smashed one half and penetrated his breeches without breaking his skin. The force of the blow winded him.

Once they found themselves in the open at the left-hand corner of the Dump, the mist swirling about their heads.

"How in the hell did we get here?" grunted Trevor.

"There must be a gap somewhere!" cried Broadchalk excitedly, "and we have walked through it."

"Then we'd better get back and fill it up," said Trevor.

A young Scots subaltern, with half-a-dozen men at his heels, suddenly appeared at their side.

"I can't stand it any more!" he shouted hysterically. "I'm going to have a smack at 'em. Come on, boys!"

He dashed forward and was swallowed up by the fog.

"There's a brave man, anyway," said Trevor. "But what good can he do?"

THEY fell back in an attempt to find the gap in the line through which they had passed, but with no success. The trenches were as densely held as ever.

"You fellows will get your heads knocked off if you aren't careful," grumbled a voice.

It came from a Sussex company commander who, with a dozen men, was occupying a communication trench leading into the thickly manned front line. For an hour or more they sat and talked to him. At his side there lay a subaltern whose nerve had gone. Broadchalk looked at him anxiously, almost fascinated by him.

THE WALKING WOUNDED RIDE

The pitiable lot of the severely wounded as they were carried by tortuous routes to crowded casualty clearing stations remains amongst the most poignant memories of those who saw the war at close quarters. This scene, however, strikes a less tragic note. Walking wounded cases from Loos are en route for the base by train, and during a halt receive a welcome drink to sustain and cheer them on their way.

L.N.A.



"Don't take any notice," whispered the captain. "He'll buck up in a minute. He had a bad time on the Dump."

The sight of those broken nerves brought back both to Trevor and Broadchalk a realization of their own physical condition. While they had been on the move they had had no time to think of themselves; there had been too much to do, too much to watch, and the tension of being shelled, gassed and attacked; also their quest, to find that strip of trench dug for them on the right, loomed largely in their minds. Now they found inactivity, helplessness, despair. They remembered how empty they were, how thirsty, how cold, how wet; that the enemy had turned them out of their position. In place of hope, they were confronted by a realization of failure and destruction.

"WHAT are they going to do to us?" groaned Broadchalk. The idea that a battalion can be decimated and yet survive to fight again did not enter his mind. "What will they do to us?" he repeated. "Send us home, I suppose."

His arm ached, his tongue felt too large for his mouth, his head swam, his eyes were craving to be closed, his stomach was hollow, his skin seemed to be drawn painfully across his ribs. Sixty hours now since sleep, food and drink had been part and parcel of his life.

Trevor glanced at him anxiously, and from him to the broken subaltern, whose teeth were chattering with that helpless regularity that comes to a man in the grip of malaria.

"This cold has got hold of him," explained the Sussex captain. "He'll be all right in a jiffy."

All right! If only one could keep one's eyes off him—fall to sleep now and forget him!

"Reinforcements wanted on the right." The message was shouted along the line. The captain rose to his feet.

"COME along, Sussex," he said, and pushed his way along the trench. "I suppose you fellows are coming, too?" he called over his shoulder, as he disappeared behind a traverse.

Broadchalk and Trevor looked at one another in hesitation. An hour earlier they would have been on the parapet and running for the promised trenches; now it seemed different, with the chatter of those teeth rattling in their ears.

Broadchalk spoke first, feebly, listening to the words as they fell from his own lips, listening with as much surprise as his muddled head was capable of expressing. He could scarcely recognize his own voice, and marvelled as to where it came from and by whom it was prompted.

"That's only for the Sussex," he said huskily. "Perhaps, if we worked our way back to the rear, we might find the Fusiliers."

He was two people now, two distinct personalities, a creature of a waking nightmare. One half of him had given way to an absolute weariness of mind and body; the other still clung to a phantom of duty, still tried to hammer into his clouded mind and aching limbs the fact that there was a job of work to be done.

TREVOR did not answer him immediately. They both stood in silence for a moment. Then he said: "I don't know" casually and with a start, as if he, too, had been surprised by his own words.

They gazed at one another in misery, pulled themselves together simultaneously, gathered their men and followed on the heels of the Sussex captain.



A FIGHTING FUSILIER

At the age of nineteen Robert Graves joined the British Army in 1914, as a subaltern with the Royal Welch Fusiliers in France. His brilliant writings after the conflict have placed him in the front rank of modern authors, his war-books in particular being of outstanding merit.

THE Béthune-La Bassée road was choked with troops, guns, and transport, and we had to march miles north out of our way to get back to Cambrin. As it was we were held up two or three times by massed cavalry. Everything seemed in confusion. A casualty clearing-station had been planted astride one of the principal cross-roads, and was already being shelled. When we reached Cambrin we had marched about twenty miles in all that day. We were told then that the Middlesex would go over first, with us in support, and to their left the Second Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, with the Cameronians in support; the junior officers complained loudly at our not being given the honour of leading the attack. We were the senior regiment, they protested, and entitled to the "Right of the Line." We moved into trench sidings just in front of the village.

There was about half a mile of communication trench between us and the trenches proper, known as Maison Rouge Alley. It was an hour or so past midnight. At half-past five the gas was to be discharged. We were cold, tired and sick, not at all in the mood for a battle. We tried to snatch an hour or two of sleep squatting in the trench. It had been raining for some time. Grey, watery dawn broke at last behind the German lines; the bombardment, which had been surprisingly slack all night, brisked up a little. "Why the devil don't they send them over quicker?" asked The Actor [a fellow officer]. "This isn't my idea of

An **AUTHOR** lives

GREAT TRAGEDY

One More Ghastly Memory of Loos

by Robert Graves

THE famous writer Robert Graves, incorporated his war experiences in one of the best-known war books, "Good-Bye to All That." At the battle of Loos he was serving as a lieutenant in the 2nd Battn. Royal Welch Fusiliers. He was in the very thick of the fighting and lived to describe this bloody action in magnificent descriptive prose

a bombardment. We're getting nothing opposite us. What little there is is going into the Hohenzollern." "Shell shortage. Expected it," answered Thomas [company commander].

We were told afterwards that on the 23rd a German aeroplane had bombed the Army Reserve shell-dump and sent it up. The bombardment on the 24th and on the day of the battle itself was nothing compared with that of the previous days. Thomas looked strained and ill. "It's time they were sending that damned accessory off. I wonder what's doing." [Accessory was a code word for gas].

What happened in the next few minutes is difficult for me now to sort out. It was more difficult still at the time. All we heard back there in the sidings was a distant cheer, confused crackle of rifle-fire, yells, heavy shelling on our front line, more shouts and yells and a continuous rattle of machine-guns. After a few minutes, lightly wounded men of the Middlesex came stumbling down Maison Rouge Alley to the dressing-station. I was at the junction of the siding and the alley. "What's happened? What's happened?" I asked. . . .

YELLOW WITH GAS

AMONG the wounded were a number of men yellow-faced and choking, with their buttons tarnished green; these were gas cases. Then came the stretcher cases. Maison Rouge Alley was narrow, and the stretchers had difficulty in getting down. The Germans started shelling it with five-point-nines. Thomas went through the shelling to battalion headquarters to ask for orders. It was the same place that I had visited on my first night in the trenches.

This group of dug-outs in the reserve line showed very plainly from the air as battalion headquarters, and should never have been occupied on the day of a battle. Just before Thomas arrived

the Germans put five shells into it. The adjutant jumped one way, the colonel another, the regimental sergeant-major a third. One shell went into the signals dug-out and destroyed the telephone. The colonel had a slight wound on his hand; he joined the stream of wounded and was carried as far as the base with it. The adjutant took charge.

ALL this time "A" Company had been waiting in the siding for the rum to arrive; the tradition of every attack was a double tot of rum beforehand. All the other companies got it except ours. The Actor was cursing: "Where the bloody hell's that storeman gone?" We fixed bayonets in readiness to go up to the attack as soon as Thomas came back with orders. The Actor sent me along the siding to the other end of the company. The stream of wounded was continuous. At last Thomas's orderly appeared, saying: "Captain's orders, sir: 'A' Company to move up to the front line."

It seems that at that moment the storeman appeared with the rum. He was hugging the rum-bottle, without rifle or equipment, red-faced and retching. He staggered up to The Actor and said: "There you are, sir," then fell on his face in the thick mud of a sump-pit at the junction of the trench and the siding. The stopper of the bottle flew out and what was left of the contents bubbled on the ground. The Actor said nothing. It was a crime deserving the death-penalty. He put one foot on the storeman's neck, the other in the small of his back, and trod him into the mud. Then he gave the order "Company forward." The company went forward with a clatter of steel over the body, and that was the last heard of the storeman.

What had happened in the front line was this. At half-past four the commander of the gas-company in the

front line sent a telephone message through to divisional headquarters: "Dead calm. Impossible discharge accessory." The answer came back: "Accessory to be discharged at all costs." Thomas's estimate of the gas-company's efficiency was right enough. The spanners for unscrewing the cocks of the cylinders were found, with two or three exceptions, to be misfits. The gas-men rushed about shouting and asking each other for the loan of an adjustable spanner. They discharged one or two cylinders with the spanners that they had; the gas went whistling out, formed a thick cloud a few yards away in No Man's Land, and then gradually spread back into the trenches.

THE Germans had been expecting the attack. They immediately put their gas-helmets on, semi-rigid ones, better than ours. Bundles of oily cotton-waste were strewn along the German parapet and set alight as a barrier to the gas. Then their batteries opened on our lines. The confusion in the front trench was great; the shelling broke several of the gas-cylinders and the trench was soon full of gas. The gas-company dispersed.

No orders could come through because the shell in the signals dug-out at battalion headquarters had cut communication both between companies and battalion headquarters and between battalion headquarters and division. The officers in the front trench had to decide on immediate action. Two companies of the Middlesex, instead of

waiting for the intense bombardment which was to follow the forty minutes of gas, charged at once and got as far as the German wire—which our artillery had not yet attempted to cut.

What shelling there had been on it was shrapnel and not high explosive; shrapnel was no use against barbed wire. The Germans shot the Middlesex men down. It is said that one platoon found a gap and got into the German trench. But there were no survivors of the platoon to confirm the story.

THE Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders went over too, on their left. Two companies, instead of charging at once, rushed back to the support line out of the gas-filled front trench and attacked from there. It will be recalled that the front line had been pushed forward in preparation for the battle; these companies were therefore attacking from the old front line. The barbed wire entanglements in front of this trench had not been removed, so that they were caught and machine-gunned between their own front and support lines. The leading companies were equally unsuccessful. When the attack started, the German N.C.O.'s had jumped up on the parapet to encourage their men. It was a Jaeger regiment and their musketry was good.

The survivors of the first two companies of the Middlesex were lying in shell-craters close to the German wire, sniping and making the Germans keep their heads down. They had bombs to throw, but these were nearly all of a

new type issued for the battle; the fuses were lit on the match-and-matchbox principle and the rain had made them useless. The other two companies of the Middlesex soon followed in support. Machine-gun fire stopped them half-way. Only one German machine-gun was now in action.

It was at this point that the Royal Welch Fusiliers came up in support. Maison Rouge Alley was a nightmare; the Germans were shelling it with five-nines bursting with a black smoke and with lachrymatory shells. This caused a continual scramble backwards and forwards. There were cries and counter-cries: "Come on!" "Get back, you bastards!" "Gas turning on us." "Keep your heads, you men." "Back like hell, boys!" "Whose orders?" "What's happening?" "Gas!" "Back!" "Come on!" "Gas!" "Back!" Wounded men and stretcher-bearers were still trying to squeeze past. We were alternately putting on and taking off our gas-helmets and that made things worse. In many places the trench was filled in and we had to scramble over the top.

END OF A COMPANY

CHILDE-FREEMAN [a company commander] got up to the front line with only fifty men of "B" Company; the rest had lost their way in some abandoned trenches half-way up. The adjutant met him in the support line. "You ready to go over, Freeman?" he asked. Freeman had to admit that he had lost most of his company. He felt this keenly as a disgrace; it was the first time that he had commanded a company in battle. He decided to go over with his fifty men in support of the Middlesex. He blew his whistle and the company charged. They were stopped by machine-gun fire before they

THEY MARCHED THIS WAY TO FIGHT AT LOOS

Before the battle of Loos started on the morning of September 25, 1915, men of the Royal Welch Fusiliers made a wearisome march along the Béthune-La Bassée road to the cheerless village of Cambrin, and there they waited for zero hour. This photograph was taken not far from the trenches they occupied outside Cambrin, where the scenes of chaos and horror, described with such harsh realism in this chapter, occurred

Imperial War Museum



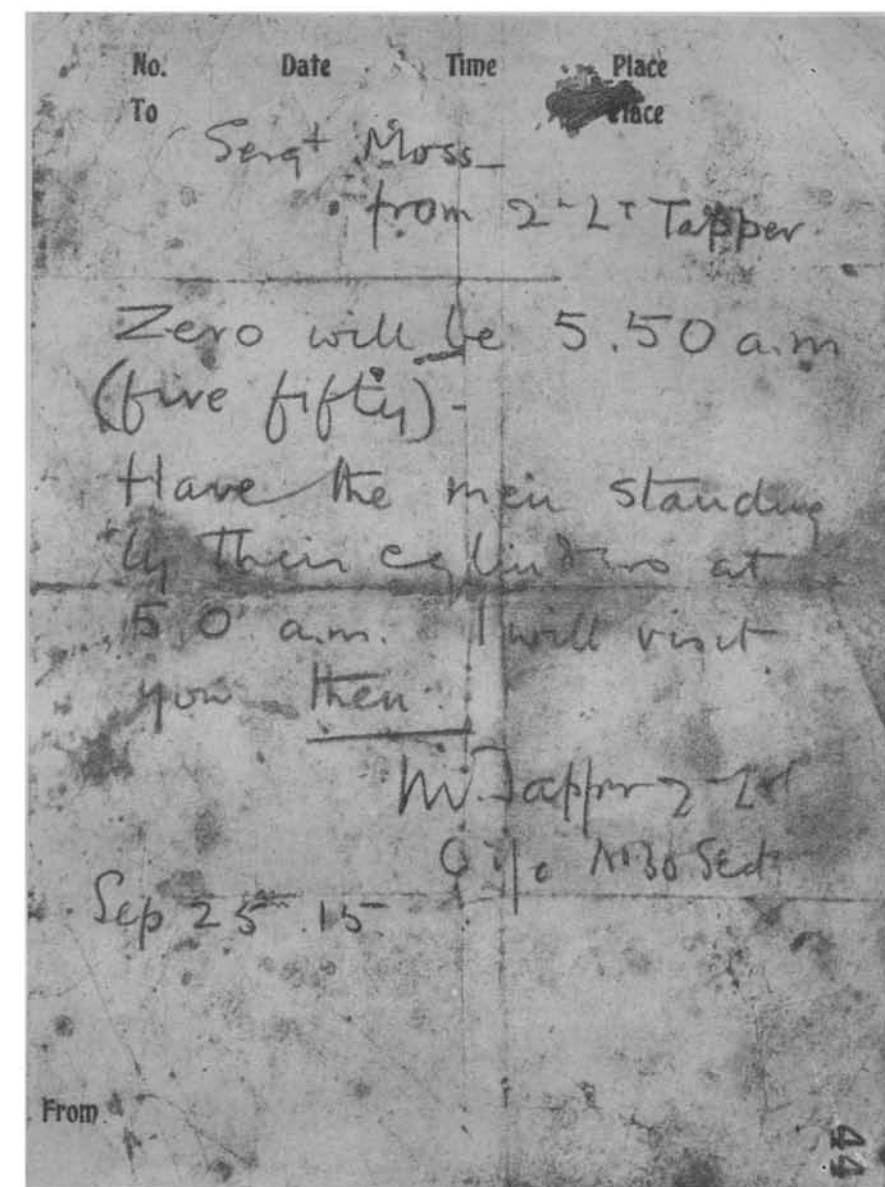
had passed our own entanglements. Freeman himself died, but of heart failure, as he stood on the parapet. After a few minutes "C" Company and the remainder of "B" reached the front line. The gas-cylinders were still whistling and the trench full of dying men. Samson decided to go over; he would not have it said that the Royal Welch had let down the Middlesex.

THERE was a strong comradely feeling between the Middlesex and the Royal Welch. The Royal Welch and Middlesex were drawn together in dislike of the Scots. The other three battalions in the brigade were Scottish, and the brigadier was a Scot, and, unjustly no doubt, accused of favouring them. Our adjutant voiced the general opinion: "The Jocks are all the same, the trousered variety and the bare-backed variety. They're dirty in trenches, they skite too much, and they charge like hell—both ways." The Middlesex, who were the original Diehard battalion, had more than once, with the Royal Welch, considered themselves let down by the Jocks. So Samson with "C" and the rest of "B" Company charged. One of the officers told me later what happened to himself. It had been agreed to advance by platoon rushes with supporting fire. When his platoon had run about twenty yards he signalled them to lie down and open covering fire.

The din was tremendous. He saw the platoon on the left flopping down too, so he whistled the advance again. Nobody seemed to hear. He jumped up from his shell-hole and waved and signalled "Forward." Nobody stirred. He shouted: "You bloody cowards, are you leaving me to go alone?" His platoon sergeant, groaning with a broken shoulder, gasped out: "Not cowards, sir. Willing enough. But they're all . . . dead." A machine-gun traversing had caught them as they rose to the whistle.

OUR company too had become separated by the shelling. The Surrey man [an attached officer of the E. Surreys] got a touch of gas and went coughing back. The Actor said he was scrimshanking and didn't want the battle. This was unfair. The Surrey man looked properly sick. I do not know what happened to him, but I heard that the gas was not much, and that he managed, a few months later, to get back to his own regiment in France. I found myself with The Actor in a narrow trench between the front and support lines. This trench had not been built wide enough for a stretcher to pass the bends.

We came on The Boy [a ranker company commander] lying on his



'... ZERO WILL BE FIVE-FIFTY'

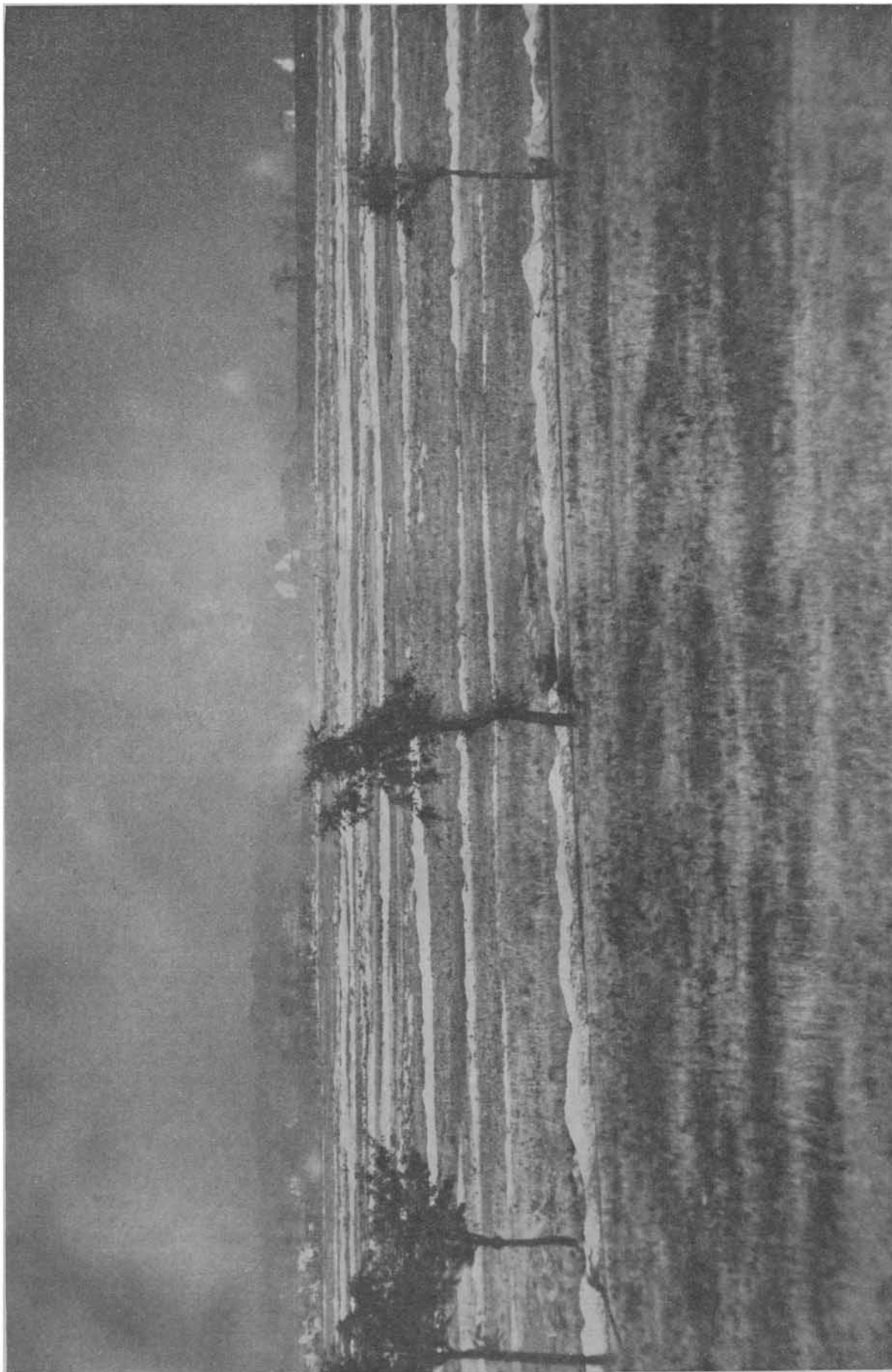
The cryptic message, reproduced above, constitutes the original operation orders which passed from 2nd Lt. Tapper to Sergeant Moss, and is a relic of the day when the British used gas for the first time as a prelude to the battle of Loos. As told in this chapter, lack of wind at the crucial zero hour, faulty keys for opening the cylinders, and enemy shells turned the effort into a disastrous failure.

Imperial War Museum

stretcher wounded in the lungs and the stomach. Jamaica [nickname for the trench mortar officer] was standing over him in tears, blubbing: "Poor old Boy, poor old Boy, he's going to die; I'm sure he is. He's the only one who was decent to me." The Actor found we could not get by. He said to Jamaica: "Take that poor sod out of the way, will you? I've got to get my company up. Put him into a dug-out or somewhere." Jamaica made no answer; he seemed paralysed by the horror of the occasion. He could only repeat: "Poor old Boy, poor old Boy." "Look here," said The Actor, "if you

can't shift him into a dug-out we'll have to lift him on top of the trench. He can't live now and we're late getting up." "No, no," Jamaica shouted wildly.

The Actor lost his temper and shook Jamaica roughly by the shoulders. "You're the bloody trench-mortar wallah, aren't you?" he asked fiercely. Jamaica nodded miserably. "Well, your battery is a hundred yards from here. Why the hell aren't you using your gas-pipes on that machine-gun in the Pope's Nose? Buzz off back to them." And he kicked him down the trench. Then he called over his shoulder:



WHERE THE TRAGEDY OF LOOS WAS PLAYED OUT

The last tragedy of the battle of Loos was an attempt to recapture the Hohenzollern Redoubt, by the 46th (North Midland) Division. It was only partially successful, and the fighting on October 13 and 14, according to the Official History, brought nothing of value and entailed a useless slaughter of infantry. Above is the scene during the attack on October 13. The British trenches and approaches can be traced by the chalk excavations crossing the foreground. There are clouds of smoke and gas in the centre and on the left. In the centre and on the right shells are bursting. Fosse 8 can be made out by the shrapnel exploding in the centre. The Redoubt is this side of it.

Imperial War Museum



HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT
OF EVIL MEMORIES
AND MEN WHO FOUGHT THERE

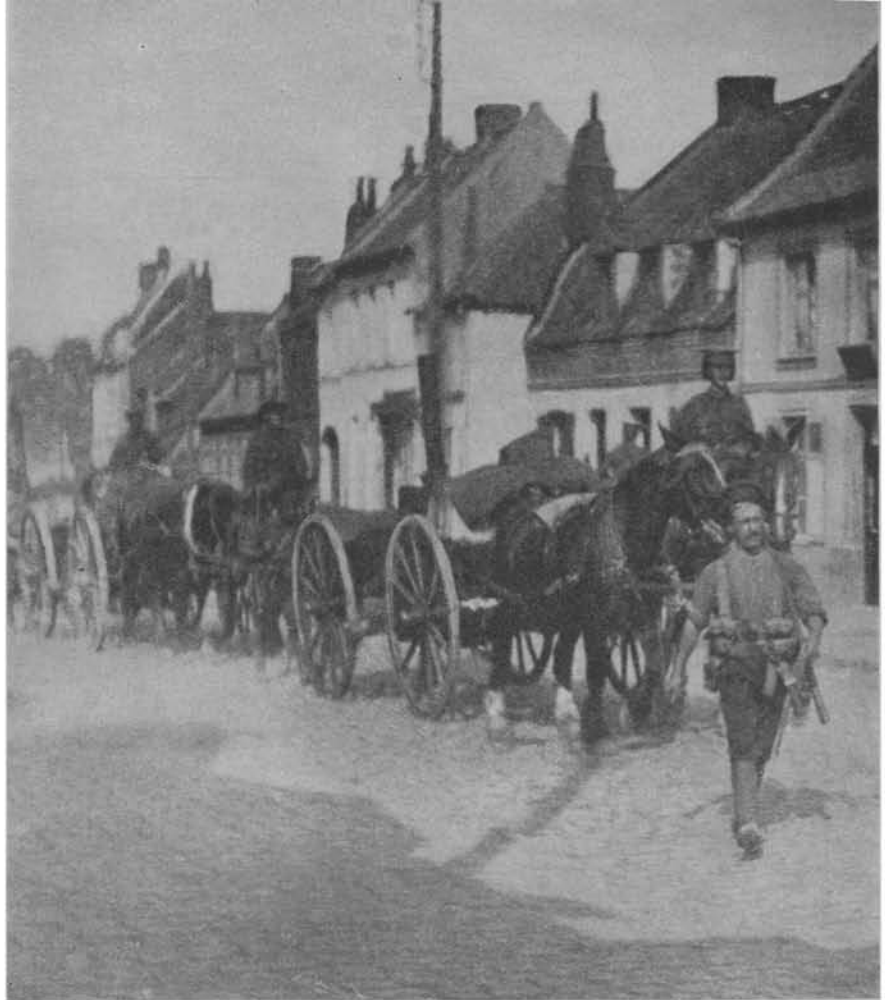
In the opposite page the country around the Hohenzollern Redoubt is shown while the battle was in progress, and above is a photograph taken when it had eventually fallen in British hands later in the war. The sand-bagging has been increased, but an excellent idea is given of the strength of the position which was captured on September 25, 1915, only to be lost again on October 3. On October 13, the 46th Division managed to regain the western portion at the cost of very heavy casualties; and, below, a party of wounded men of this division is seen returning after the action.



"Sergeant Rose and Corporal Jennings, lift this stretcher up across the top of the trench. We've got to pass." Jamaica leaned against a traverse. "I do think you're the most heartless beast I've ever met," he said weakly.

We went on up to the front line. It was full of dead and dying. The captain of the gas company, who had kept his head, and had a special oxygen respirator, had by now turned off the gas. Vermorel-sprayers had cleared out most of the gas, but we still had to wear our masks. We climbed up and crouched on the fire-step, where the gas was not so thick. Then Thomas arrived with the remainder of "A" Company and, with "D," we waited for the whistle to follow the other two companies over.

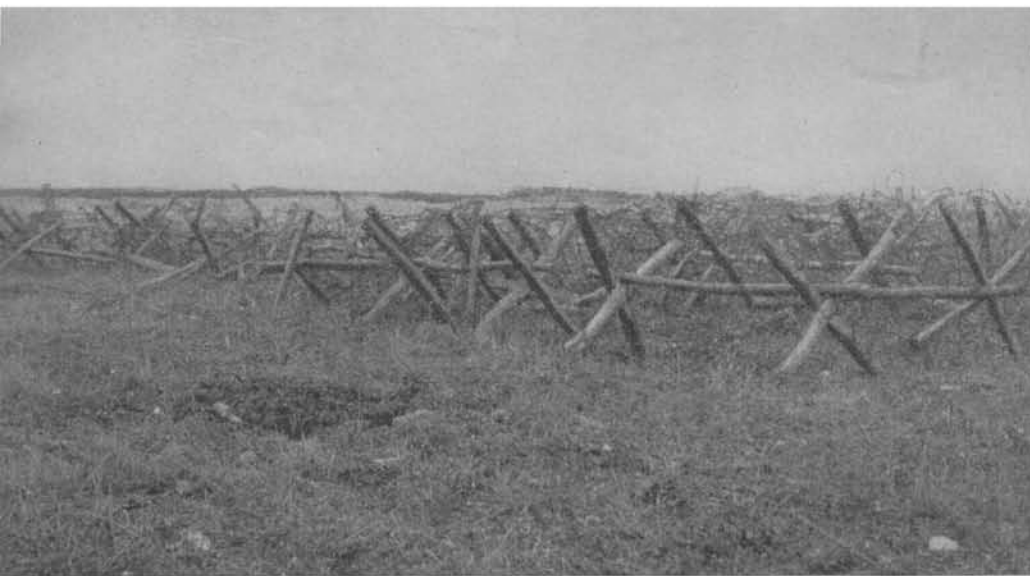
FORTUNATELY at this moment the adjutant appeared. He told Thomas that he was now in command of the battalion and he didn't care a damn about orders; he was going to cut his losses. He said he would not send "A" and "D" over until he got definite orders from Brigade. He had sent a runner back because telephone communication was cut, and we must wait. Meanwhile the intense bombardment that was to follow the forty minutes' discharge of gas began. It concentrated on the German front trench and wire. A good deal of it was short, and we had further casualties in our trenches. The survivors of the Middlesex and of our "B" and "C" Companies in craters in No Man's Land suffered heavily.



THE COOKS AND THEIR KITCHENS CAME BACK

The Army cooks, though non-combatants, were none the less called upon to show courage of the first order, for they, with their field-kitchens, fed the troops from just behind the front line. Here a column of field kitchens is returning from the battle of Loos. Behind the limber is the cooker, a boiler and self-contained furnace, in which soups and stews were cooked either when halted or on the march.

Imperial War Museum



DEATH-TRAP OF BARBED WIRE

The barbed wire entanglements used in defence by the Germans were of what was known as the "knife-rest" type. A rough wooden trestle in the form of a knife-rest was strung across with many strands of barbed wire, and a number of these placed together, as seen in this photograph taken on the battlefield of Loos, made a practically impassable obstacle.

Imperial War Museum

My mouth was dry, my eyes out of focus, and my legs quaking under me. I found a water-bottle full of rum and drank about half a pint; it quieted me and my head remained clear. Samson ("C" Company commander) was lying wounded about twenty yards away from the front trench. Several attempts were made to get him in. He was very badly hit and groaning.

THREE men were killed in these attempts and two officers and two men wounded. Finally his own orderly managed to crawl out to him. Samson ordered him back, saying that he was riddled and not worth rescuing; he sent his apologies to the company for making such a noise. We waited for about a couple of hours for the order to charge. Sergeant Townsend was making feeble, bitter jokes about the good old British Army muddling through and how he thanked God we still had a Navy. I shared the rest of the rum with him, and he cheered up a little. Finally a runner came with a message that the attack was off for the present.

I PLEADED IN VAIN for NURSE CAVELL

by Brand Whitlock

U.S. Minister in Belgium, 1915



HE LEFT NO STONE UNTURNED

Though lying on a sick bed, Mr. Brand Whitlock, above, left no stone unturned to save Nurse Cavell, and where the representative of the greatest neutral power failed no one could have succeeded.

At nine o'clock that Monday evening [October 11, 1915], Maître de Leval [a lawyer friend of the author] appeared suddenly at the door of my chamber; his face was deathly pallid. He said that he had just heard from the nurses who were keeping him informed, that the judgement had been confirmed and that the sentence of death had been pronounced on Miss Cavell at half-past four that afternoon and that she was to be shot at two o'clock the next morning. It seemed impossible, especially the immediate execution of sentence; there had always been time at least to prepare and to present a plea for mercy. To condemn a woman in the evening and then to hurry her out to be shot before another dawn! Preposterous!

BUT no; Maître de Leval was certain. That evening he had gone home and was writing at his table when, about eight o'clock, two nurses were introduced. One was Miss Wilkison, "petite et nerveuse, toute en larmes," the other "plus grande et plus calme." Miss Wilkison said that she had just learned that the court had condemned Miss Cavell to death, that the judgement had been read to her in the cell of the prison at four-thirty that afternoon, and that the Germans were going to shoot her that night at two o'clock. Maître de Leval told her that it was difficult to believe such news since twice he had been told that the judgement had not been rendered and would not be rendered before the following day, but on her reiterating that she had this news from a source that was indisputable, de

Leval left at once with her and her friend and came to the Legation. And there he stood, pale and shaken. Even then I could not believe—it was too preposterous; surely a stay of execution would be granted. Already in the afternoon, in some premonition, Maître de Leval had prepared for my signature a recours en grâce to be submitted to the Governor-General, and a letter of transmittal to present to the Baron von der Lancken. I asked Maître de Leval to bring me these documents, and signed them; then at the last minute, on the letter addressed to von der Lancken [Head of the German Political Section in Brussels], I wrote these words:

Mon cher Baron,—Je suis trop malade pour vous présenter ma requête moi-même, mais je fais appel à votre générosité de cœur pour l'appuyer et sauver de la mort cette malheureuse. Ayez pitié d'elle!

Votre bien dévoué,

BRAND WHITLOCK.

ITOLD Maître de Leval to send Joseph at once to hunt up Gibson [Secretary of the U.S. Legation] to present the plea, and if possible to find the Marquis de Villalobar [the Spanish Minister] and to ask him to support it with the Baron von der Lancken.... The Governor-General was in his château at Trois-Fontaines, ten miles away, playing bridge that evening. Maître de Leval went....

The nurses from Miss Cavell's school were waiting in a lower room. Other nurses came for news; they too had heard, but could not believe. Then the Reverend Mr. Gahan, pastor of the English church, came.

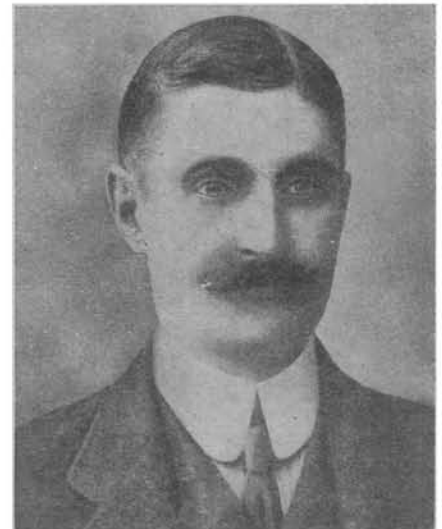
He had had a note from someone at the St. Gilles prison—a note written in German, saying simply:

"Come at once; someone is about to die."

He went away to the prison; his frail, delicate little wife remained at the

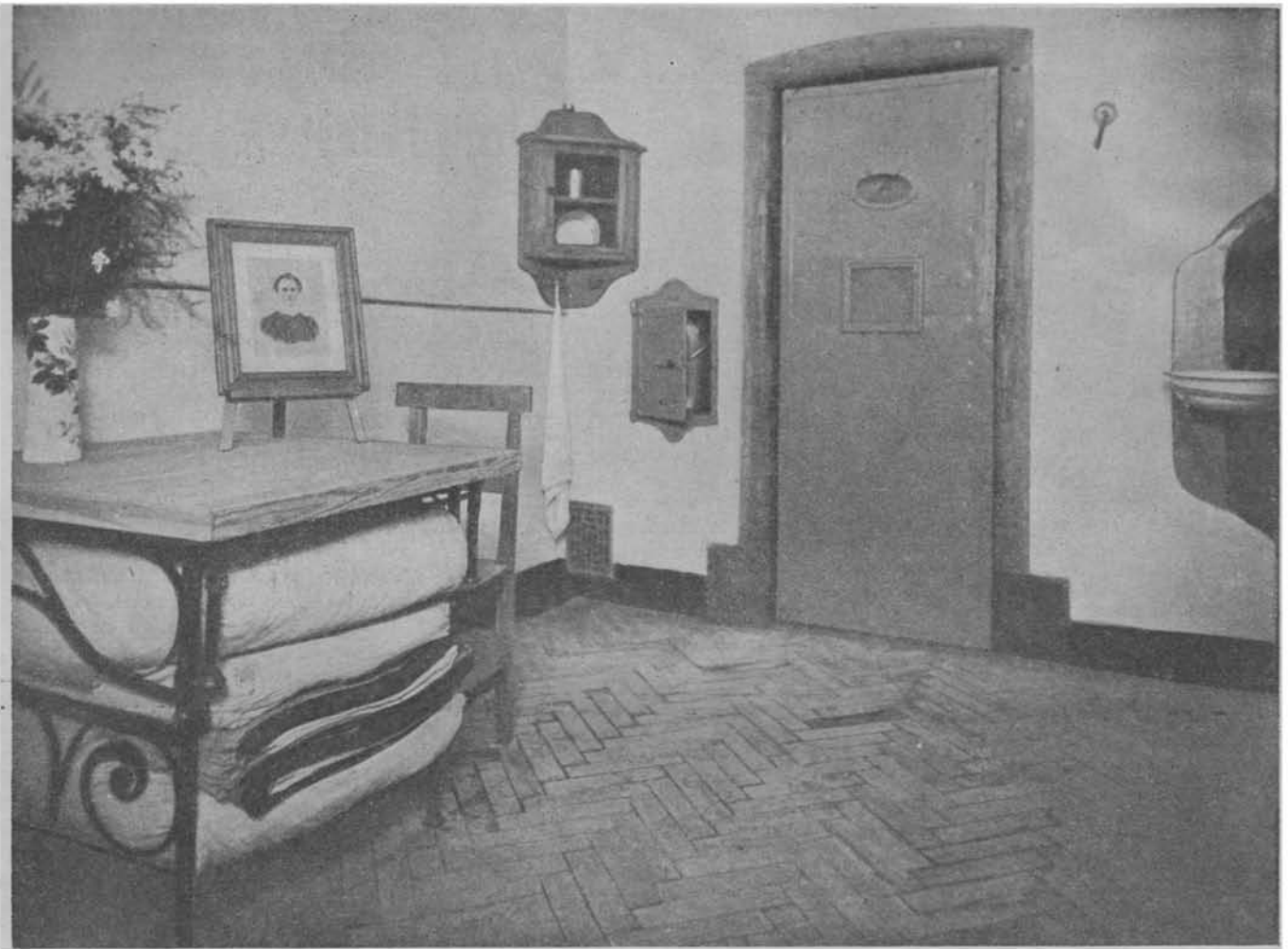
Legation, and there my wife and Miss Larnier sat with those women all that long evening, trying to comfort, to reassure them. Outside a cold rain was falling. Up in my chamber I waited... A stay of execution would be granted, of course; they always were granted. There was not in our time, anywhere, a court, even a German court-martial, that would condemn a woman to death at half-past four in the afternoon and hurry her out and shoot her before dawn.

Midnight came, and Gibson, with a dark face, and de Leval, paler than ever. There was nothing to be done. De Leval had gone to Gibson and together they went in search of the Marquis, whom they found at Baron Lambert's [a Belgian banker], where he had been dining; he and Baron Lambert



HE PROVED A BROKEN REED

The last pleas for the life of Nurse Cavell were made to Baron von der Lancken, above, but as representative only of the German civil power, he declared his inability to do more than pass on the plea to the Military Governor.



CONDEMNED CELL BECOMES A SHRINE

The last hours of Nurse Cavell's life were passed in this cell, No. 23, in St. Gilles Prison, Brussels, and from here she was taken to the Tir National, where, at 2 a.m. on the morning of October 12, she faced a German firing party with unflinching courage, her last words being "I am glad to die for my country." The cell has been kept as nearly as possible as it was when Nurse Cavell occupied it, flowers and her portrait being the only additions that have been made.

and M. Francqui [Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Committee] were over their coffee. The Marquis, Gibson, and de Leval went to the rue Lambermont. The Ministry was closed and dark; no one was there. They rang, and rang again, and finally the concierge appeared—no one was there, he said. They insisted. The concierge at last found a German functionary, who came down, stood staring stupidly; every one was gone; His Excellency was at the theatre. At what theatre? He did not know. They urged him to go and find out. He disappeared inside, went up and down the stairs two or three times, finally came out and said that he was at "Le Bois Sacré." They explained that the presence of the Baron was urgent and asked the man to go for him; they turned over the motor to him and he mounted on the box beside Eugène.

They reached the little variety theatre there in the rue d'Arenberg. The German functionary went in and found the Baron, who said he would come when the piece was over.

ALL this while Villalobar, Gibson, and de Leval were in the salon at the Ministry, the room of which I have spoken so often as the yellow salon because of the satin upholstery of its Louis XVI furniture of white lacquer—that bright, almost laughing little salon, all done in the gayest, lightest tones, where so many little dramas were played. All three of them were deeply moved and very anxious—the eternal contrast, as de Leval said, between sentiments and things. Lancken entered at last, very much surprised to find them; he was accompanied by Count Harrach and by the young Baron von Falkenhausen.

"What is it, gentlemen?" he said. "Has something serious happened?"

They told him why they were there, and Lancken, raising his hands, said: "Impossible!"

He had vaguely heard that afternoon of a condemnation for "spying" (*sic*), but he did not know that it had anything to do with the case of Miss Cavell, and in any event it was impossible that they would put a woman to death that night.

"Who has given you this information? For, really, to come and disturb me at such an hour you must have information from serious and trustworthy sources."

De Leval replied:

"Without doubt, I consider my information trustworthy, but I must refuse to tell you from whom I received it. Besides, what difference does it make? If the information is true our presence at this hour is justified; if it is not true I am ready to take the consequence of my mistake."

The Baron showed irritation.

"What!" he said. "It is because 'they say' that you come and disturb

me at such an hour, me and these gentlemen? No, no, gentlemen, this news cannot be true; orders are never executed with such precipitation, especially when a woman is concerned. Come to see me tomorrow."

He paused, and then added:

"Besides, how do you think that at this hour I can obtain any information. The Governor-General must certainly be sleeping."

Gibson, or one of them, suggested to him that a very simple way of finding out would be to telephone to the prison.

"Quite right," he said; "I had not thought of that."

He went out, was gone a few minutes, and came back embarrassed, so they said, even a little bit ashamed, for he said:

"You are right, gentlemen; I have learned by telephone that Miss Cavell has been condemned, and that she will be shot to-night."

THEN de Leval drew out the letter that I had written to the Baron and gave it to him, and he read it in an undertone—with a little sarcastic smile, so de Leval said—and when he had finished he handed it back to de Leval and said:

"But it is necessary to have a plea for mercy at the same time . . ."

"Here it is," said de Leval, and he gave him the document. Then they all sat down.

I could see the scene—as it was described to me by Villalobar, by Gibson, by de Leval, in that pretty little Salon Louis Seize that I knew so well—Lancken giving way to an outburst of feeling against "that spy," as he called Miss Cavell, and Gibson and de Leval by turns pleading with him, the Marquis sitting by. It was not a question of spying, as they pointed out; it was a question of the life of a woman—a life that had been devoted to charity, to the service of others.

She had nursed wounded soldiers, she had even nursed German wounded at the beginning of the war, and now she was accused of but one thing—of having helped British soldiers make their way towards Holland. She may have been imprudent, she may have acted against the laws of the occupying Power, but she was not a spy, she was not even accused of being a spy, she had not been convicted of spying, and she did not merit the death of a spy.

They sat there pleading, Gibson and de Leval, bringing forth all the arguments that would occur to men of sense and sensibility. Gibson called Lancken's attention to their failure to inform the Legation of the sentence, of their failure to keep the word that had been given.

HE argued that the offence charged against Miss Cavell had long since been accomplished, that as she had been for some weeks in prison a slight delay in carrying out the sentence could not endanger the German cause; he even pointed out the effect such a deed as the summary execution of the death sentence against a woman would have on public opinion, not only in Belgium but in America and elsewhere; he even spoke of the possibility of reprisals.

But it was all in vain. Baron von der Lancken explained to them that the Military Governor—that is, General von Sauberzweig—was the supreme authority in matters of this sort, that

the Governor-General himself had no authority to intervene in such cases, and that under the provisions of German martial law it lay within the discretion of the Military Governor to accept or refuse an appeal for clemency. And then Villalobar suddenly cried out:

"Oh, come now! It's a woman; you can't shoot a woman like that!"

The Baron paused, was evidently moved.

"Gentlemen, it is past eleven o'clock; what can be done?"

It was only von Sauberzweig who could act, he said, and they urged the Baron to go to see von Sauberzweig. Finally he consented. While he was gone, Villalobar, Gibson, and de Leval



IN DAYS OF PEACE

Nurse Cavell is here seen at home with her dogs before the shadow of war had fallen on Europe. She had an intense love for her country, and it was only her great sense of duty that took her in 1906 from her post of Superintendent of the London Infirmary to become Matron of the Belgian School of Certified Nurses in Brussels, where the events that led to her tragic death took place.

repeated to Harrach and von Falkenhausen all the arguments that might move them. Von Falkenhausen was young, he had been to Cambridge in England, and he was touched, though of course he was powerless. And de Leval says that when he gave signs of showing pity, Harrach cast a glance at him, so that he said nothing more, and that then Harrach said :

"The life of one German soldier seems to us much more important than that of all these old English nurses . . ."

At last Lancken returned and, standing there, announced :

"I am exceedingly sorry, but the Governor tells me that it is after due reflection that the execution was decided upon, and that he will not change his decision. . . Making use of his prerogative, he even refuses to receive the plea for mercy. . . Therefore, no one,

not even the Emperor, can do anything for you."

WITH this he handed my letter and the requête en grâce to Gibson. There was a moment of silence in the yellow salon. Then Villalobar sprang up, and seizing Lancken by the shoulder said to him in an energetic tone :

"Baron, I insist on speaking to you !"

"C'est inutile . . ." began Lancken.

"Je veux vous parler !" the Marquis replied, giving categorical emphasis to the harsh imperative.

The old Spanish pride had been mounting in the Marquis, and he literally dragged the tall von der Lancken into a little room near by ; then voices were heard in sharp discussion, and even through the partition the voice of Villalobar :

"It is idiotic, this thing you are



going to do ; you will have another Louvain !"

A few moments later they came back—Villalobar in silent rage, Lancken very red. And, as de Leval said, without another word, dumb, in consternation, filled with despair, they came away.

I heard the report, and they withdrew. A little while and I heard the street door open. The women who had waited all that night went out into the rain.

THE rain had ceased, and the air was soft and warm the next morning ; the sunlight shone through an autumn haze. But over the city the horror of the dreadful deed hung like a pall. Affiches were early posted and crowds huddled about them in a kind of stupefaction, reading the long and tragic list down to the line that closed with a piece of gratuitous brutality.

"Le jugement rendu contre Baucq et Cavell a déjà été exécuté." [The sentence against Baucq and Cavell has already been carried out.]

Of the twenty-six others condemned with Miss Cavell, four—Philip Baucq, an architect of Brussels, Louis Thuillez, a school teacher of Lille, Louis Severin, a pharmacist of Brussels, and the Countess Jeanne de Belleville—were sentenced to death.

All day long sad and solemn groups stood in the boulevards gazing at the grim affiche. In one of the throngs a dignified old judge said :

"Ce n'était pas l'exécution d'un jugement ; c'était un assassinat !" [It was not the carrying out of a sentence ; it was murder !]



SHE WAS TRIED WITH NURSE CAVELL

Mme. Bodart, seen in the top photograph, was a close friend of Nurse Cavell and helped her with the greatest courage in giving assistance to escaping soldiers. Mme. Bodart accompanied the fugitives on their perilous journey, taking them by train to Haecht, whence they tramped for two nights and days to the Dutch frontier. In the lower photograph, Mme. Bodart is standing at the level crossing at Haecht station. She was tried at the same time as Nurse Cavell and was sentenced to 15 years penal servitude.



'HER NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE'

These words are carved on the lowest stone of the plinth of the simple cross which marks Nurse Cavell's grave, seen above, beneath the walls of Norwich Cathedral. Two other memorials commemorate the tragic story. The spot where Nurse Cavell faced the firing party in the Tir National, Brussels, seen below, has been enclosed as a grave might be. The third memorial, right, is the dignified and impressive statue in London near the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. It was erected by public subscription, the fund having been inaugurated by the "Daily Telegraph." The sculptor was Sir George Frampton, R.A.

Photographs, L.N.A., Central Press, and G. MacCormack



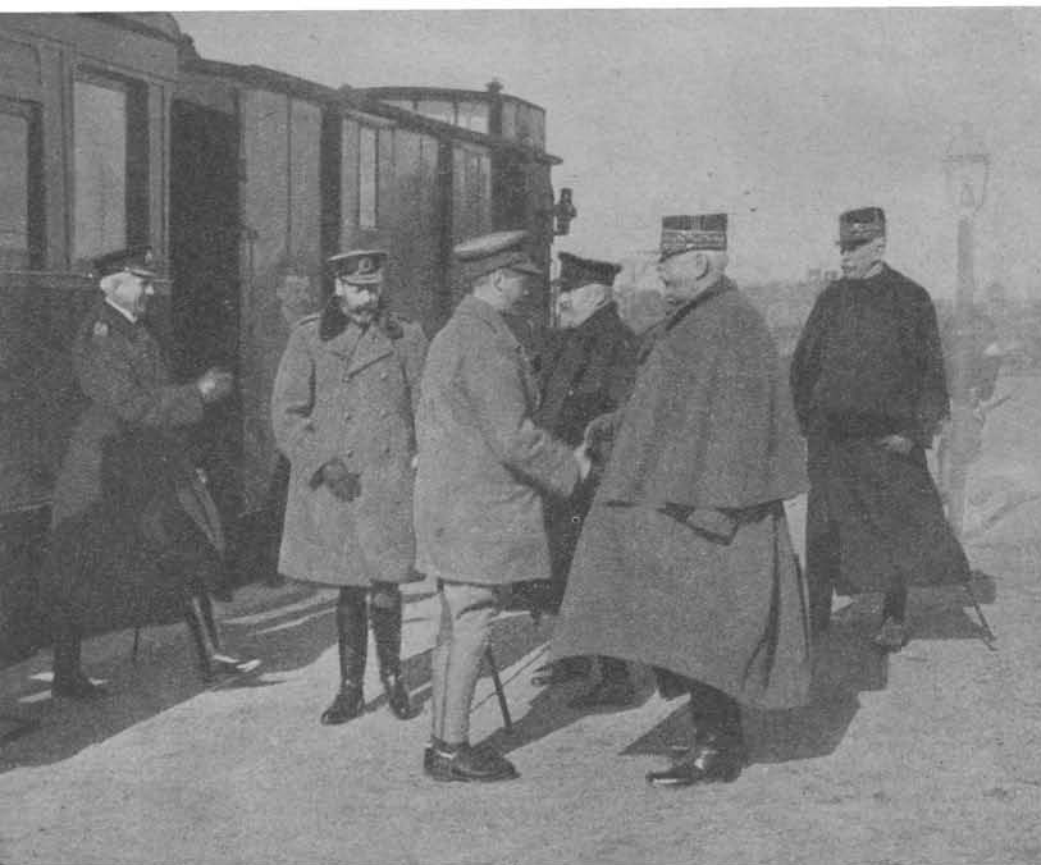


L.N.4

KING GEORGE VISITS HIS ARMIES

AND APPEALS TO HIS PEOPLE

THROUGHOUT the Great War King George V maintained a close personal contact with all branches of the fighting services, and made numerous visits to France, where he inspected the Army in the field. The upper and lower photographs shown here were taken on the occasion of the late King's second visit in October 1915. Above, His Majesty speaks to General officers of the Canadian Corps near their headquarters; below, the King with the Prince of Wales at Amiens, where they were greeted by General Joffre and President Poincaré. It was during this sojourn in France that King George was injured at Hesdigneul aerodrome when his horse fell and rolled on him.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

TO MY PEOPLE

At this grave moment in the struggle between my people and a highly organised enemy who have aggressed the Laws of Nations and changed the boundaries that have civilised Europe together, I appeal to you.

I rejoice in my Empire's effort and I feel pride in the voluntary response from my Subjects all over the world who have sacrificed home, fortune, and life itself in order that another may not inherit the free Empire which their ancestors and mine have built.

I ask you to make good these sacrifices.

The God is not in sight. More men and yet more are wanted to keep my Armies in the field, and through them to secure Victory and Enduring Peace.

In ancient days the darkest moment has ever produced in men of our race the sternest resolve.

I ask you, men of all classes to come forward voluntarily and take your share in the fight.

In freely responding to my appeal you will be giving your support to our brothers who for long months have nobly upheld Britain's past traditions and the glory of her Arms.

George R. V.

With the close of the first twelve months of the war, events in France took the gravest turn, with the British forces sorely tried and facing an enemy of increasing strength and power. It was then that the proclamation of King George, reproduced above, was issued calling on men of all classes to take their share in the fight.

TEN MINUTES GOODWILL

A Happy Memory of the Second Christmas Armistice

by Wilfred Ewart

THE author of "Scots Guard," whose description of the battle of Neuve Chapelle appears in Chapter 59, here reveals the fact that (despite strict orders to the contrary) fraternization took place on the second Christmas Day of the war. Later, anything in the nature of an unofficial armistice was met with severe punishment, such as the stopping of leave for units who encouraged the practice

IT is Christmas morning. As I gaze over the parapet on the drab landscape before me, every feature, every rise or fall in the ground, every knoll, every hideous skeleton of shattered buildings, almost every tree, has its story, so consecrated for ever to the memory of the English race is the Aubers Ridge opposite—an inconsiderable, scarcely noticeable rise in the ground. So are the skeleton trees, the hedgerows and fields that fringe its summit, that climb its slope. So are the bright red and dark red roofs of buildings that cluster half-way up the slope and the tall factory chimney in their midst—that of Aubers itself.

In the foreground is a village absolutely shattered. It is scarcely possible to see the brown roofs, the stark walls, and vari-coloured ruins amid the trees. Then comes the church—a ghostly shell, dominating the flat scene. And behind the trenches is a row of tall elms and poplars, looking monstrous in the mist, these marking the line of a road. Immediately in front of them is a big farmstead with a courtyard and a square little home-field—an untidy heap of red bricks amid four naked walls.

BETWEEN the irregular lines of the trenches, with their jumbled white sandbags and untidy earth parapets, is a stream marked by a line of twisted brown willows bent to every conceivable grotesque shape. The stream runs down the middle of No Man's Land, which is itself a place of coarse grasses hiding little mouldering heaps of grey and khaki—the slain of Festubert, of Neuve Chapelle and late September (heaps of old clothes or fallen scarecrows, they look like), of knobs and unexpected pits, of earthy holes and water-logged ditches. And here our men meet the Germans.

So soon as it grows light this morning we start peeping at each other over the top of the parapet . . . calling across

to each other. And presently, at about 7.50, a German stands up openly on the parapet and waves his arms. He is followed by two in field-grey overcoats and pill-box caps. Then they come out all down the line, stand up on the parapet, wave, shout, and finally swarm forth from their trenches on either side.

A British sergeant is shot dead almost at the outset, as he stands on the parapet. But this makes no difference. It must be an accident. The supreme craving of humanity, the irresistible, spontaneous impulse born of a common faith and a common fear, fully triumph.

AND so the grey and khaki figures surge towards each other as one man. The movement has started on the right. It spreads like contagion. Only we officers, the sentries, and a few non-commissioned officers remain in our trench. The men meet at the willow-lined stream; they even cross it and mingle together in a haphazard throng. They talk and gesticulate, and shake hands over and over again. They pat each other on the shoulder and laugh like schoolboys, and leap across the little stream for fun. And when an Englishman falls in and a Boche helps him out there is a shout of laughter that echoes back to the trenches.

The Germans exchange cigars and pieces of sausage, and sauerkraut and concentrated coffee for cigarettes and bully beef and ration biscuits and tobacco. They express mutual admiration by pointing and signs. It is our leather waistcoats and trench-coats that attract their attention; it is their trench-overalls, made of coarse canvas, that attract ours. We shout "Hullo, Fritz!" "Good morning, Fritz!" "Merry Christmas!" "Happy Christmas!" "How's your father?" "Come over and call!" "Come and have breakfast," and the like, amid roars of laughter. Even confidences are exchanged in broken English.



A BORN SOLDIER

Mr. Wilfred Ewart came on both sides from families that had produced distinguished soldiers. His paternal grandfather, Lieut.-General J. F. Ewart, fought in the Crimean War, while his mother was a granddaughter of General Sir William Napier.

"When's the war going to end?"
"After the Spring offensive."
"Yes—after the Spring offensive."
"What sort of trenches have you?"
"Rotten! Knee deep in mud and water. Not fit for pigs."
"Aren't you sick of the war? We are!"
"Not a bit."

And the information is even vouchsafed that our Christmas Eve bombardment had caused the Germans a lot of casualties.

So for ten brief—all too brief—minutes there is peace and goodwill among the trenches on Christmas Day.

Then from the trenches of the Ninety-fifth Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment two officers in black accoutrements and shiny field-boots come out, wishing to take photographs of our Tommies, and offering them cigars. Their request is refused, and presently they say: "You will have five minutes to get back to your trenches before our artillery will open fire."

And it does. And two or three men are wounded almost at once. But for twenty-four hours not a shot is fired on either side. A common brotherhood of suffering—or is it an act of God, or just human curiosity? has united Englishmen and Bavarian in fraternity on the battlefield this grey Christmas morning which no one on either side who has taken part in this quaint scene will ever forget.

HOW THEY CELEBRATED CHRISTMAS, 1915 BEHIND THE LINES

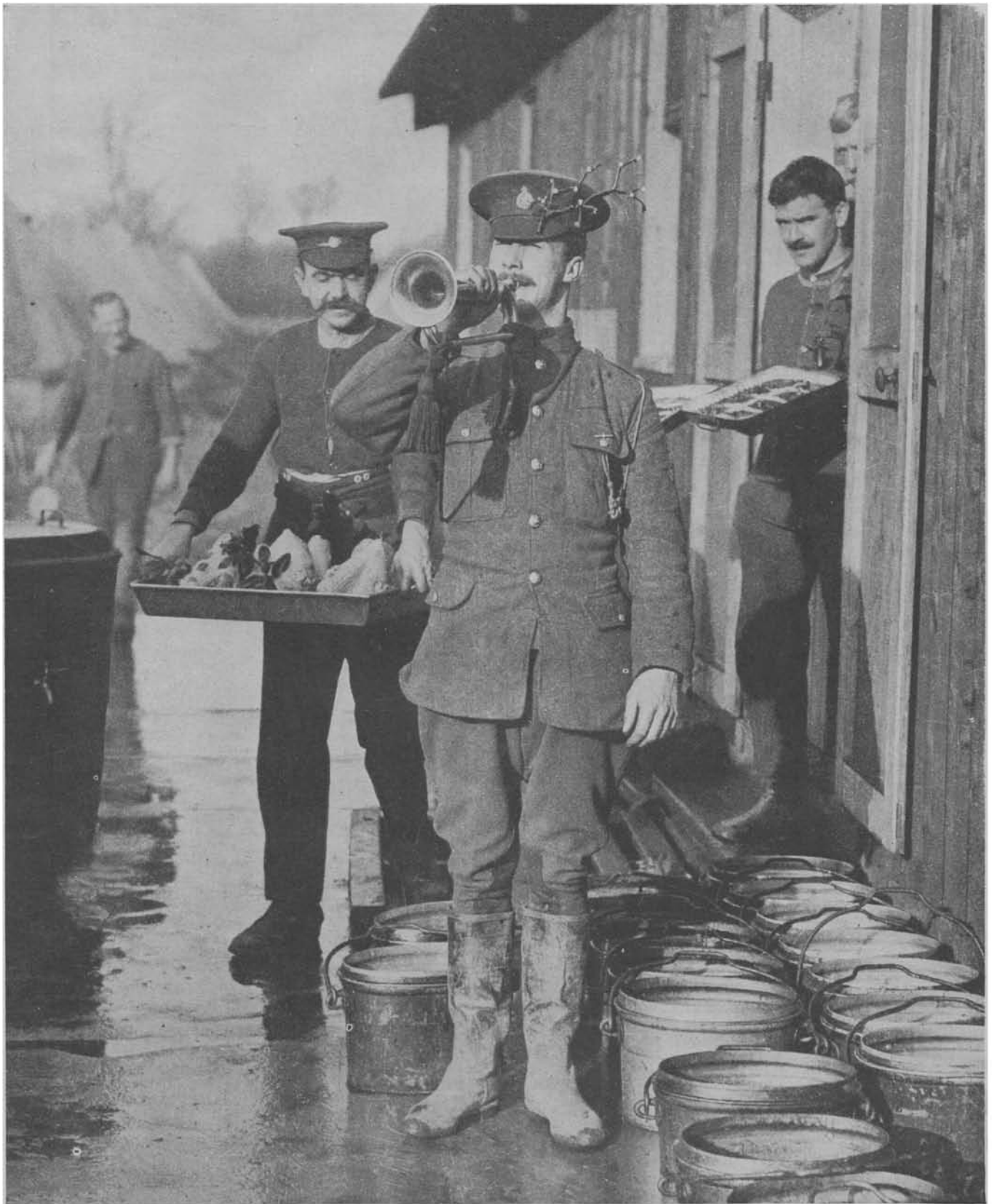
Though the second year of the war was one of disappointment and many shattered hopes, both for those who fought and those who waited at home, Christmas in 1915 did not pass without the traditional celebrations being observed by the British Army in France. As Mr. Wilfred Ewart reminds us in Chapter 93, there was even a Christmas armistice at one part of the line.



These three photographs recall the Christmas period of 1915. Above, a scrounging party behind the lines takes steps to gain true Christmas fare; below, men of the A.S.C. make their way in Christmas weather to a depot to collect the Christmas mail from home; on the left, decorations are going up in what soldiers called a "cushy" billet.

L.N.A.

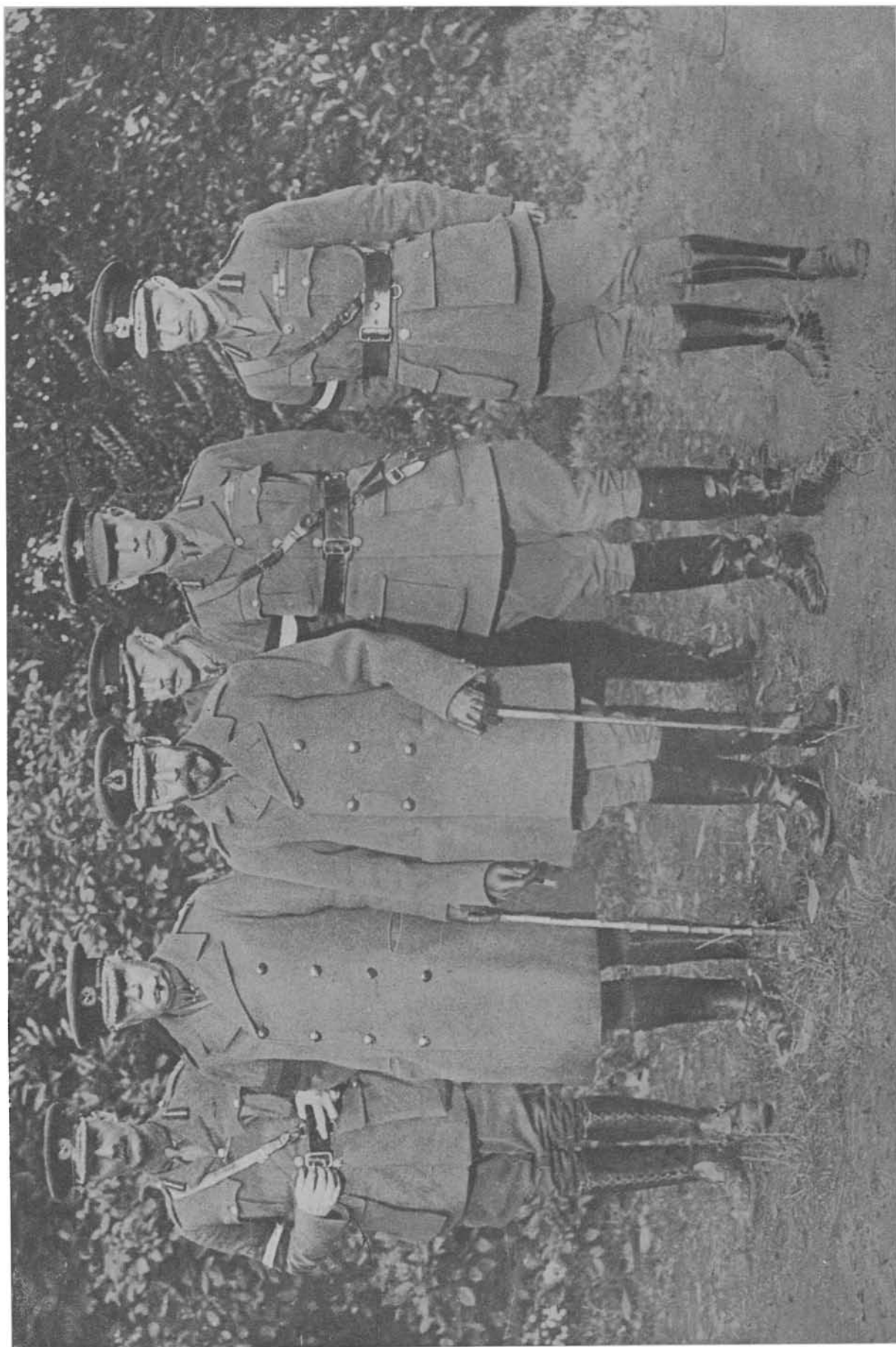




L.N.A.

MOST WELCOME CALL OF ALL

In the trenches the soldiers were too often only figuratively "fed-up" with bully beef, but behind the lines the food was fairly varied. This bugler of the Army Veterinary Corps is sounding "Come to the cookhouse door" on a very special occasion. It is Christmas Day, 1915, and the sprig of mistletoe in his cap, the smiling faces of the men around him and the tray of plump chickens that the man on his right is carrying prove that it is going to be kept in the old English way.



THE KING MEETS HIS GENERALS IN CRITICAL DAYS

In the latter part of 1915, when his armies were faced with overwhelming tasks, King George V made his second visit to France and conferred with his generals. This photograph, taken in October 1915, shows His Majesty with Sir Herbert Plumer, commander of the Second Army, who is standing between the King and Lieut.-General Sir John Kell, commander of the Fifth Corps. On the right of the photograph are Generals Sir Charles Fergusson and Sir Hew Fanshawe.

Leaves from the Editor's Note-Book

(Continued from page ii of this wrapper)

MORE than one correspondent has asked whether we cannot give stories from "the other side," and Mr. Bulcraig of St. John's Wood puts it very clearly. He says:

"Being one of the many thousands who served in the Great War, I am reading with great interest your weekly publication *I WAS THERE* and I feel I must congratulate you and all concerned for giving us old sweats such a fine collection of photos and stories. I must say I am looking forward to the parts which will contain the description of battles in which I had the honour to take part.

"May I express a thought that has been in my mind since I have read your book, and that is: would it not be possible for you to obtain from some of our late enemies their experiences and accounts of different battles? We might then gather what was happening over the other side and compare it with what we thought was happening and at least trace back how some of our rumours started."

THIS sort of material is very valuable and of very great interest, because it is always intriguing, if no more, to know what one's "opposite number" in any part of the line really was doing and thinking. I am arranging to include in our scheme a few chapters from the enemy side; but, as my readers will, of course, easily appreciate, there is a limit to what can be done in this way, for the bulk of material available from the British side alone is so great—one might almost say vast—that every enemy story automatically means the exclusion of British material.

ANOTHER gunner, Mr. J. H. Ives, whom I have already mentioned in this page, sends me a second letter, returning the enlarged print of the photograph printed in page 38, which I was pleased to send him to help his identification; he is now quite certain that he recognizes himself in it. His Battery, the 120th of the 27th Brigade, R.F.A., arrived at St. Ghislain, near Mons, on the 22nd August, and came into action the following morning, a Sunday. He says:

"The Battery was badly damaged and ordered to retire, leaving two guns and wagons, with horses, behind. The particular gun of which I was one of the detachment had the shield and muzzle badly damaged and was abandoned, also several of us wounded, myself slightly. As time went on the enemy's fire increased, and I went to a stone-built place to have my wound attended to, where I discovered Major Holland lying fatally wounded. However, I was ordered to get away as quickly as possible. I think I was the last member to leave the remains of the Battery, running as best I could from door to door escaping bullets.

"My luck changed, as I heard horses trotting which turned out to be a gun-team, and I soon scrambled on the wagon.

"I should like to mention that Colonel Alexandra, in charge of the Brigade, and Captain Grenfell, 9th Lancers, who came to our aid, were both awarded the V.C."

ONE of the definitely interesting and satisfactory features of our work is the way in which revived memories of war-time days also revive war-time acquaintances and friendships. It is for this purpose that I am starting in Part 15 an "Old Comrades' Corner," which will, I am sure, help to bring into touch many old comrades who have, perhaps, lost sight of one another in the twenty and more years since they fought together. The remarkably strong evidence of a widespread revival of interest in what we call the human side of the war, to which I think the success of *I WAS THERE* has largely contributed, has shown that there is real need for these human contacts. As an example, I should be very glad if anyone can tell me anything of the whereabouts or fate of Mr. Percy Hoole Jackson, who was wounded and gassed

in the Ypres Salient in 1917. It happens that a member of Private Jackson's family is wanting to get into touch with him.

THE example I gave earlier in this particular Note-Book of a howitzer battery man who was not unreasonably a little jealous that his unit did not get mention in a certain article in our pages can be multiplied many times in my correspondence. There is a very healthy pride among members of units with fine achievements to their credit, and it is not unnatural that the members of these units should be looking out for some reference to such achievements. Mr. H. G. R. Cox, of Forest Gate, not only wants to know whether his unit, the 7th Dragoon Guards, will be shown somewhere in our pages, but goes so far as to ask whether it would be possible to obtain a photograph of his regiment in wartime. He has been wise enough to give an order for a complete series of *I WAS THERE*, for, as he says, "It seems to me that one lives in it all over again."

MR. COX does not seem quite to have appreciated that our scheme is strictly chronological, and expresses surprise that Captain Adrian Carton de Wiart has not yet been mentioned. He is certainly worthy of mention, as he was not only wounded 13 times, and won the V.C., but also became a Major-General, as many of my readers will remember, and received the C.B., the C.M.G., and the D.S.O. As he won his V.C. on the 2nd-3rd July, 1916, he will according to our scheme be considered at the beginning of the Somme Battle, and I can promise Mr. Cox and other equally interested readers that he and some other V.C.'s of the Somme will receive adequate mention at this period. Readers in general, will, I am sure, appreciate that the very natural scarcity of photographs of war-time units and actions before the middle of 1916, when official photography began, makes it more than merely difficult to discover photographs of any particular unit.

AS may be easily understood, the Home front has its memories as vivid in their own way as those of the Western and Eastern fronts. In Part VII, I published a number of pages dealing with the Home front in 1914, including the story of an officer who commanded the forts at the Hartlepoons when they and the towns were suddenly and savagely bombarded by three German cruisers. Mrs. Charlotte Tuckey, of Barton-on-Sea, sends me an extremely interesting letter and a complete dossier of the work of herself and her late husband on the North-East Coast from 1914-19. Brevet-Colonel Tuckey organized the medical services of the North-East coast during the whole of the war, and received special commendation from Lord Plumer for his heroic work at the Hartlepoons. Mrs. Tuckey, who organized V.A.D. work on a large scale, also had her share of thrills when, during the bombardment, an 11-inch shell skimmed through the roof of the house she was living in and crashed into the one opposite. She says: "I shall never forget the bravery of those poor women with their babies and children clinging to them, mostly in their night attire, fleeing from the town in hundreds—on that raw, cold, foggy morning." Like many thousands of my readers, Mrs. Tuckey is very naturally pleased and gratified that after all these years those who worked and suffered on the Home front are not forgotten.

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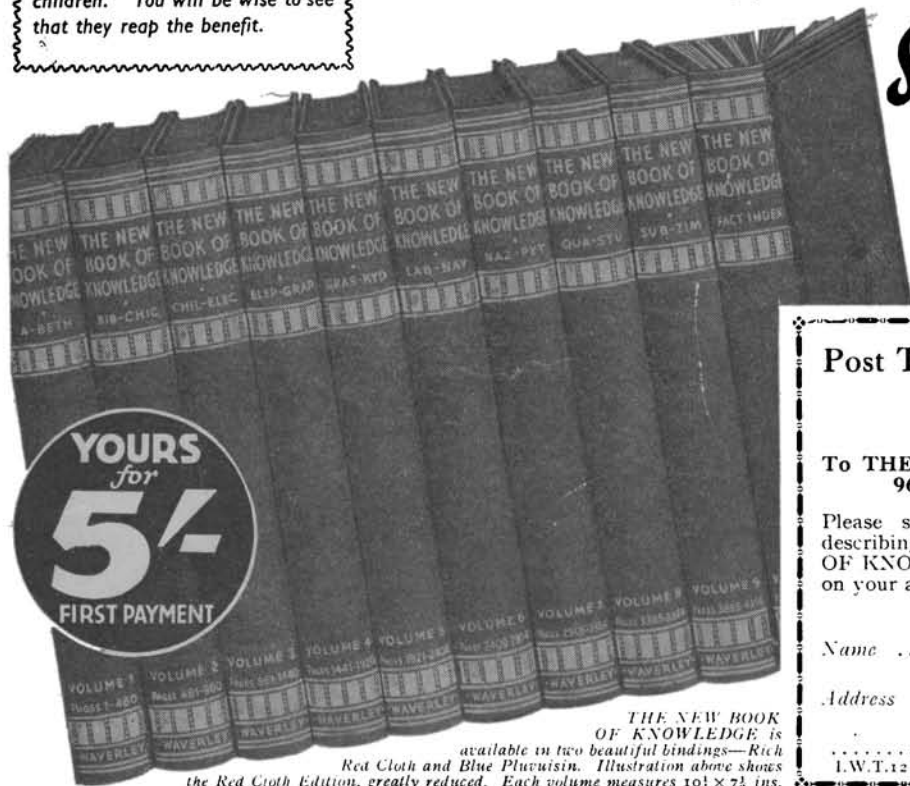
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